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AN INTRODUCTION
TO A CRITICAL EDITION OF
LE SECRET DES RUGGIERI

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

1937

By
WILLIAM L. CRAIN

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DARGAN and WEINBERG, Editors: *The Evolution of Balzac's "Comédie humaine"*
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Avant-propos.* In *Œuvres complètes*, éd. Conard, I, xxv-xxxviii.
- Béch.** Editions published by Mme Charles-Béchet.
- Char.** Editions published by Charpentier.
- Con.** Editions published by Louis Conard.
- Corr.* *Correspondance de H. de Balzac, 1819-1850* (*Œuvres complètes*, éd. Calmann-Lévy, Vol. XXIV).
- Corr. Carraud.* *Correspondance inédite avec Madame Zulma Carraud, 1829-1850*, éd. M. Bouteron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1935).
- Dum.** Editions published by Dumont.
- Fur.** Editions published by Furne, Dubochet et Hetzel.
- Gos.** Editions published by C. Gosselin.
- LEt.* *Lettres à l'Etrangère* (3 vols.; Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1899, 1906, 1933).
- LF.* *Letters to His Family*, ed. W. S. Hastings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934).
- Lov. Coll.* Lovenjoul Collection.
- Lov., Hist.* Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, Charles de, *Histoire des œuvres de H. de Balzac* (3d ed.; Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1888).
- Mame** Editions published by Mame et Delaunay-Vallée.
- MLN* *Modern Language Notes*.
- MP* *Modern Philology*.
- N.R.F.* *La Comédie humaine*, éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française (10 vols.; Paris, 1935-37).
- OC.* *Œuvres complètes*, éd. Calmann-Lévy (24 vols.; Paris, 1869-76).
- OD.* *Œuvres diverses*, Vols. XX-XXIII of OC.
- PMLA* *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.
- RDM* *Revue des deux mondes*.
- RHL* *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*.
- Sou.** Editions published by Hippolyte Souverain.
- Wer.** Editions published by Werdet.

* This abbreviation may refer to any work of Balzac published by the publisher named; for its exact meaning at any given place the reader is referred to the individual chapters.

CHAPTER IV
AN INTRODUCTION TO A CRITICAL EDITION OF
LE SECRET DES RUGGIERI

By WILLIAM L. CRAIN
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I

THE fame of the *Comédie humaine* as a whole—magnificent in its scope, faithful in its recording of observed detail, penetrating in its analysis of contemporary French manners—has not prevented certain critics from perceiving that the man who fathered the realistic novel in France was at the same time an outstanding figure in an essentially romantic genre. Of the series of novels and *nouvelles* in which Balzac partly fulfilled his early intention of writing “a picturesque history of France,” the most important is the trilogy *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, one of whose parts—originally called *Le Secret des Ruggieri*—is the subject of the present study.¹

According to Wells, “the novel, as a whole, is sufficient to show that Balzac might have been as easily the first historical novelist of France as he is first in other fields of fiction.”² Bellessort calls the work “une de nos plus fortes études de nos Guerres de Religion.”³ Both writers praise our author for his description of people and of places, remarking in this historical novel the same archeological preoccupation which anchors the rest of the *Comédie humaine* so firmly in time and space. For, as Bellessort points out,

¹ It should be explained that my dissertation, “A Critical Edition of Balzac’s *Le Secret des Ruggieri*,” complete in typewritten form, can be consulted at the University of Chicago Libraries under the call number “f PQ2163.C87 1937.” In revising the Introduction for publication in the present volume I have eliminated, as far as possible, actual cross-references to the edition proper. Occasionally, however, it will be necessary to speak of readings that have nowhere been published or to refer to *Chronique de Paris* readings, the text of which is not available in America except in my unpublished critical edition.

² B. W. Wells, *A Century of French Fiction*, p. 146. See also p. 107.

³ A. Bellessort, *Balzac et son œuvre*, p. 94.

Il ne pardonnait pas au progrès de la voirie la disparition d'un Paris dont son *Martyr calviniste* et le *Secret des Ruggieri* nous avaient donné de si pittoresques eaux-fortes; d'un Paris "qui n'existera plus que dans les ouvrages des romanciers assez courageux pour décrire fidèlement les derniers vestiges de l'architecture de nos pères."⁴

Wells finds *Sur Catherine de Médicis* "interesting for its minute archaeological reproduction both of buildings and of manners, and also for its analysis of the complex nature and policy of Catherine, whom Balzac seems to have been one of the first to apprehend."⁵

It is this very point—as to whether Balzac really did apprehend the character of Catherine—which will determine for many readers the novel's truth, historically speaking. For Catherine's personality is the unifying force—the keynote—of the various parts. Several reviewers have recognized this fact, and one of them writes:

In Balzac's brilliant study she is the enigmatic "Mona Lisa," whose inward irony shines forth on subtle, sarcastic lips and in lustrous, sideward glancing eyes; an unintelligible woman, who combined serpent guile with dove-like wisdom, and who overshadowed her three kingly sons with the pure force of her virile and implacable nature. Florence never produced a more singular piece of mosaic than this woman.⁶

Some critics, notably Baldensperger and Saintsbury, feel that Balzac's *Etude philosophique* "on" Catherine⁷ was not completely successful; Baldensperger, considering it "une des œuvres les plus prétentieuses de Balzac," goes so far as to call it "une des tentatives les moins réussies."⁸ Before we can evaluate these unfavorable opinions of the novel, we ought to be more familiar with the history of its publication and with the subject matter of the different parts.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159. The Balzac quotation is taken from *Ce qui disparaît de Paris* (OD., Vol. XXI), p. 437.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 145. Italics mine.

⁶ Anonymous review of Katharine Prescott Wormeley's translation (Roberts Brothers' ed.), in *The Critic*, XXIII (January 12, 1895), 25-26. See also a review in *ibid.*, XXVIII (November 13, 1897), 281-82.

⁷ It was George Saintsbury, in his Preface to the novel, who said that it was "important to remember the *Sur* if injustice is not to be done to the intentions of the author." The Saintsbury Preface has been reprinted several times (see Royce, *A Balzac Bibliography*, p. 186); in the Gebbie ed., from which we cite now and later, it occupies pp. ix-xiii.

⁸ Fernand Baldensperger, *Orientations étrangères chez Honoré de Balzac*, p. 164 and p. 63.

II

In the history of the publication of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*⁹ lies a partial explanation of the disparity in quality which we shall note in the four divisions that make up the complete novel.¹⁰ For they were composed in exactly the reverse of their present order, and the dates of first publication extend over the period from 1830 to 1843. Only the "Préface"—or "Introduction," as it was later called—was *inédite* when, in January, 1843, the four divisions appeared under a collective title for the first time. Hippolyte Souverain was the publisher, and the title was *Catherine de Médicis expliquée* (three volumes in octavo, dated 1842). Since the order of the various parts was the one maintained ever since, it is convenient to continue with the history of the collective publications before going back to the previous history of the individual stories.

The Souverain arrangement (with the relative length of the divisions indicated by means of Conard paging) was as follows:

"Préface"¹¹ (occupying 46 pages in the definitive Conard edition)

"Première partie: *Le Martyr calviniste*" (210 pages in Conard)

"Deuxième partie: *Le Secret des Ruggieri*" (83 pages in Conard)

"Troisième partie: *Les Deux Rêves*" (18 pages in Conard)

The Souverain edition, with its original 1842 title-pages, is today extremely rare, for a large part of the edition appeared "En vente chez Chlenowski, rue du Jardinnet, 8" with the *millésime* 1845.¹² The Chlenowski

⁹ The starting-point for the history of publication of any novel by Balzac is, of course, Lovenjoul's *Histoire des œuvres de H. de Balzac* (3d ed.). *Sur Catherine de Médicis* is discussed on pp. 185-90 and 425-27. The present investigator has not limited himself to this work but has checked with the *Bibliographie de la France* and with the original editions themselves. An article by Lovenjoul, "Les *Etudes philosophiques* de Honoré de Balzac," *RHL*, 14th year (July-September, 1907), pp. 393-441, furnishes indispensable information concerning the history of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* and of *Le Martyr calviniste*. This article, still in process of publication at the time of Lovenjoul's death, was his last work; without it there would be a great gap in our knowledge of the *Etudes philosophiques*.

¹⁰ Although the novel is properly called a trilogy, the "Introduction" is long and important enough to be designated one of the four divisions.

¹¹ Called "Introduction" in the subsequent editions and so referred to by Lovenjoul and in the Conard notes. Except for a long omission whose text is reproduced in Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 187-88, and which we shall discuss in connection with the interrelationship of the four divisions, the "Préface" remains substantially unchanged when it becomes the "Introduction." We shall, in general, refer to it by the latter title, and for the reader's convenience shall give both the Souverain and the Conard paging of any passages cited.

¹² The Conard notes (XXX, 397) are strangely misleading with reference to the dating and contents of the Souverain ed.: "La première et la deuxième partie, précédées

is not a genuine separate edition but merely a reissue with new title-pages. The text being that of Souverain, we shall use the latter name alone to designate the readings of either the original issue or the reissue.

In the Souverain edition (and consequently in the Chlendowski reissue) the work was dedicated thus:

DÉDICACE.¹³

À Monsieur le Marquis de Pastoret,
MEMBRE DE L'ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS.
—INSTITUT.—

There followed, undated, the rather long dedicatory note which appears in subsequent editions with the date "Paris, janvier 1842." In this note Balzac laments the researches which have been wasted in an attempt to find, for example, the exact spot where Hannibal crossed the Alps, when modern history is so neglected and "les calomnies les plus odieuses pèsent encore sur des noms qui devraient être révévés." Especially does he regret that "l'histoire la plus importante au temps actuel, celle de la Réformation," is full of obscurities. But Balzac and the Marquis de Pastoret have made independently "les mêmes recherches sur la grande et belle figure de Catherine de Médicis," and in thus dedicating his novel our author desires to pay "au caractère et à la fidélité de l'homme monarchique, un public hommage, peut-être précieux par sa rareté."¹⁴

d'une introduction, furent imprimées, en volumes, en 1842 pour paraître chez Souverain, en 1845 (3 vols. in-8°), avec dédicace, datées de janvier 1843. L'ouvrage portait le titre général de: *Catherine de Médicis expliquée* et se divisait en: *Introduction*; I. *Le Martyr calviniste*; II. *Le Secret de Ruggieri*." The annotator completely neglects the appearance of *Les Deux Rêves* in the Souverain, saying that this third part was added in 1846 for the Furne publication. Lovenjoul, cited as authority for the Conard note, avoids this error and also recognizes the true dating of the Souverain ed. as 1842; he does not mention the Chlendowski reissue. The present writer has seen one copy of the work bearing both the date 1845 and the name of Souverain as publisher, but ordinarily it is the Chlendowski sales announcement which appears. The *Bibliographie de la France* announced the Chlendowski contract as early as the August 31 and September 7, 1844, issues, and on September 21, 1844, stated that *Le Martyr calviniste* (actually the whole of *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*) was on sale.

¹³ In subsequent editions the words "Dédicace" and "Institut" were dropped.

¹⁴ The Marquis de Pastoret, whose historical researches and monarchical leanings Balzac praises, was the author of an anonymous work entitled *Le Duc de Guise à Naples*, or *Mémoires sur les révolutions de ce royaume en 1647 et 1648*; in 1828 Balzac, who was then in the printing business, printed the title-pages, if not the text proper, of the 2d ed. (see Conard notes, XXX, 398). The present writer has examined, in a Paris librairie, a copy of Pastoret's volume with the notation on the verso of the half-title: "IMPRIMERIE DE H. BALZAC/Rue des Marais S. G. n. 17."

The complete work next appeared in Volume XV (pp. 468-662) and Volume XVI (pp. 1-78) of the first edition of the *Comédie humaine*, published by Furne, Dubochet et Hetzel—familiarily called the "Furne edition." Both volumes appeared in 1846, although the former is dated 1845; they were the second and third volumes, respectively, of the fifth edition of the *Etudes philosophiques*. The novel bears its final title, *Sur Catherine de Médicis*. The word "expliquée" in the earlier edition perfectly expresses Balzac's intention as set forth in the "Préface," or "Introduction"; and, although one of the "explanatory" passages was deleted from the Furne text (see above, n. 11), the old title would still be appropriate. In the present title the "Sur" is pretty weak, and Saintsbury's gentle warning is needed.

In the Furne edition Parts I-III retained their earlier titles with the exception of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, which was called *La Confiance des Ruggieri*. In the title of my unpublished critical edition (see above, n. 1), *Le Secret* has been preferred rather than *La Confiance*, because the former was the title under which the story had an independent existence. Incidentally, besides being somewhat ambiguous, *La Confiance* is the less intriguing title; *Le Secret* piques the reader's interest at once.

Changing none of the titles henceforth, Balzac still wrote textual corrections on the flyleaves and margins of his copy of the Furne edition, carrying on a process of revision which, for *Le Secret des Ruggieri* at least, had begun with the unfinished manuscript and had continued through several sets of proofs and the successive publications. Study of the proof sheets and editions of *Le Secret* discloses some oversights which, if detected in time, would have affected the final text; nevertheless, since Balzac personally revised the various forms, I believe the Conard editors had no choice but to use the corrected Furne text, embodying the author's final intentions, as the basis for their "definitive" edition.

Of the three stories that had an independent history prior to the Souverain edition, *Les Deux Rêves* was the earliest. If Balzac's dating ("Paris, janvier 1828") is correct, it ranks with *Les Chouans* and *La Physiologie du mariage* as one of the first works of the *Comédie humaine* to be composed. It was first published in *La Mode* of May 8, 1830; then in the December (1830) number of the *Revue des deux mondes* with a new title, *Le Petit Souper, conte fantastique*. Upon publication in volume form for the first time, in Volume III of the *Romans et contes philosophiques*,¹⁵ it resumed its

¹⁵ Published by Charles Gosselin, September, 1831; 3 vols., in octavo. *Les Deux Rêves* reappeared in Vol. II of the 1832 ed. of the *Contes philosophiques* (2 vols., in octavo), and in Vol. IV of the 1833 ed. of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* (4 vols., in octavo)—all published by Gosselin.

original title, which has since been maintained. It was published with three other *nouvelles* in Volume XII of the *Etudes philosophiques* in 1837, in the same *livraison* with *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, and under almost the same peculiar conditions as regards publishers' names and the dating of the volume (see below). This was its last independent publication.

Le Secret des Ruggieri first appeared in journal form in the *Chronique de Paris* of December 4, 11, and 18, 1836, and January 22, 1837. Its only publication in volume form before the Furne edition was as Volume XIII of the *Etudes philosophiques*, third *livraison*. Although bearing the name Werdet and the *millésime* 1836 on the title-page, it was not actually put on sale until August of 1837. For, as Lovenjoul explains,¹⁶ the "quasi-faillite" of Werdet, occurring shortly after the appearance of the second *livraison* in August or September, 1836, required his successors to make important modifications in the subdivisions of the succeeding volumes of *Etudes philosophiques*. Most of them were delayed, the third *livraison* (5 vols.) appearing August 17, 1837, after having been "déposée et enregistrée dans la *Bibliographie de la France* du 8 juillet 1837." They were brought out by Delloye et Lecou, "acquéreurs des traités passés par Balzac avec Werdet."

Not only were publishers changed, but printers as well, even within the same volume; Lovenjoul warns us that when "les noms de Béthune et Plon, comme imprimeurs, sont inscrits à la seconde page de chacun des titres," this last indication, "malgré son apparence officielle," is far from being exact.¹⁷ Later in the same article¹⁸ we read:

Pour le tome treize: *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, cette déplorable combinaison d'impressions diverses se produit de nouveau. Les dix premières feuilles, dont la dernière page est chiffrée 117-118, furent imprimées et tirées chez Baudouin, 2, rue Mignon, et les feuilles onze à vingt, qui terminent le volume, sortent, ainsi que le titre et la couverture, des presses de Béthune et Plon. Néanmoins, l'exemplaire de Balzac porte un titre au nom de Werdet, avec le millésime de 1836. Ce titre, imprimé chez Baudouin, désigne donc ce dernier comme l'imprimeur de tout le volume!!

¹⁶ Art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, pp. 394-95.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 426. At this point Lovenjoul also states that "le nom de Werdet est remplacé, sur les titres et couvertures, par ceux de Delloye et Lecou, comme éditeurs." While true of other volumes of the third *livraison*, this is probably incorrect as regards the title-page of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, which, in all the copies I have seen, keeps the name of Werdet. For Vol. XIII, the date 1837 and the names of Delloye et Lecou appear only on the covers.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

This information takes on special significance in connection with our study of proof sheets, for the first ten *feuilles*, printed by P. Baudouin, correspond exactly to Chapter I of the story; and the remaining ten, which Lovenjoul says were printed by Béthune et Plon, comprise Chapters II and III. Lovenjoul apparently thinks that the title-page of Balzac's copy was unique, but the present investigator owns one copy and has used two others, all of which agree with Balzac's in having the name of Werdet as publisher on the title-page. Since these copies are bound without the covers, the names of Delloye et Lecou do not appear at all. We shall therefore refer to this as the "Werdet edition" in spite of its being issued and sold by Delloye et Lecou.

The history of *Le Martyr calviniste* before the Furne edition likewise reflects an interesting phase of Balzac's life as "homme d'affaires," involving not only Werdet's pseudo-bankruptcy but also a struggle with Belgian pirating. In consequence of the Werdet affair, the story never appeared in the Werdet series of *Etudes philosophiques* at any time but was first published in *Le Siècle* under the title of *Les Lecamus*, from March 23 to April 4, 1841. However, it was written, at least in part, several years earlier—a fact we should keep in mind in view of the story's relationship with *Le Secret des Ruggieri*.¹⁹ Exactly when it was written, and how completely at any one stage, we cannot determine; but Lovenjoul's article, already referred to, is very helpful. He says that it was first intended for publication as *Un Martyr* in Volume XII (1837) of the Werdet series and that it was then announced successively as *Le Pelletier de la Reine* and *Le Fils du pelletier* before it appeared as *Les Lecamus*.²⁰ Volume XII, like the volume which contains *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, was printed by two different firms: the first fourteen *feuilles*, in 1836, by Baudouin; and the remaining eight *feuilles*, together with the covers and title-page, by Béthune et Plon, in 1837. If Balzac had carried out his original plans, the last story in the volume would have been not *Les Martyrs ignorés* but the one which we now know as *Le Martyr calviniste*.²¹

¹⁹ See pp. 345–59, below, for a discussion of variants in the published form of both stories as a result of their appearing together.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 395. In Lov., *Hist.*, p. 186, the author gives still another announced title: *Les Lecamus ou Catherine de Médicis prise au piège*.

²¹ A curiously ambiguous title-page, *Un Martyr*, intended for *Le Martyr calviniste* but kept for *Les Martyrs ignorés* because it was the last sheet of a *feuille* and could not be removed, serves to remind us of Balzac's change in publishing plans. From Lovenjoul's article we can piece together an almost complete history of *Le Martyr calviniste* while it was still called *Un Martyr*. He dates the conception of the story as 1835, or, at

So much for the delays in publication caused in part by Werdet's "bankruptcy." As for the effect of Belgian counterfeiting, a long note inserted by Balzac at the end of Volume I of the Souverain edition is significant. There he tries to explain away an error in the use of the term "Calvinistes"²² in the early part of that edition by blaming it on the Belgians. "Talonnée par la contrefaçon," he says, "la littérature est obligée de ruser avec la Belgique"; and "les auteurs français, pour tromper l'avidité des pirates de Bruxelles, ne publient point en entier leurs romans dans les journaux." Alleging that the subscribers to *Le Siècle* found the appellation "Calvinistes" more intelligible than "Réformés," he pleads that in his preoccupation with enlarging *Les Lecamus* (9 chapters) into *Le Martyr calviniste* (18 chapters) he failed to correct the journal version with sufficient care.²³ The Belgian publication of *Les Lecamus* was by the firm of Meline, Cans et Compagnie, of Brussels, in 1841—two years before its first appearance in volume form in France—and, as Balzac points out, it follows the text of *Le Siècle*.

III

What was the nature of the three stories whose early history we have been tracing? What prompted Balzac to concern himself with Catherine for so many years, finally grouping the separate works under one title? Saintsbury's Preface contains some pertinent observations on these points:

And though it is, let it be repeated, a mistake, and a rather unfair mistake, to give such a title to the book as might induce readers to regard it as a single and definite novel, of which Catherine is the heroine, though it is made up of three parts written at very different times, it has a unity which the introduction shows to some extent, and which a rejected preface given by M. de Lovenjoul shows still better.

To understand this, we must remember that Balzac, though not exactly an the very latest, 1836; my study of *Ruggieri* proof sheets makes me believe that, however early Balzac may have had the idea, he did not work on the actual Werdet manuscript of *Un Martyr* until late in 1836 or 1837 (for evidence see below, pp. 347-48). A few Werdet proof sheets of *Un Martyr* have been preserved which prove that printing was actually begun; and a note from Balzac to the printer Charles Plon (written on the last page of the manuscript of *Massimilla Doni* and reproduced on p. 437 of the Lovenjoul article) leads one to think that Balzac's interest in *César Birotteau* may have been an important reason for postponing the completion of *Un Martyr*.

²² For Balzac's corrections of the word in *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, see pp. 346-47, below.

²³ *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*, I, 333-34. It is proposed to deal with the correction and expansion of *Les Lecamus* in a separate study.

historical scholar, was a considerable student of history; and that, although rather an amateur politician, he was a constant thinker and writer on political subjects. We must add to these remembrances the fact of his intense interest in all such matters as Alchemy, the Elixir of Life, and so forth, to which the sixteenth century in general, and Catherine de' Medici in particular, were known to be devoted. All these interests of his met in the present book.²⁴

Les Deux Rêves (1830), as we have seen, was the first part to be published. There is not much to be said for the story as such: two strange men—a lawyer and a surgeon, who are finally identified as Robespierre and Marat, respectively—find themselves in unaccustomed society at the home of the wealthy Bodard de Saint-James, in the Place Vendôme, in the year 1786. At a late supper (supper and salon scenes abound in Balzac's work at this early period) they are plied with liquor by the other guests, among whom is Beaumarchais! Warmed with drink, the two men talk, each relating a strange dream: the lawyer reports a dream conversation with Catherine de Médicis in which she defends herself with respect to the St. Bartholomew Massacre; and the surgeon describes a fantastic operation upon a gangrened leg in such a way as to suggest, by analogy, the inevitability of a coming revolution in which blood would be shed to relieve the ills of the nation.

A detailed summary of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* (1836-37)—in preparation for our study of proof corrections—is given below (pp. 299 ff.). It is in this story that Balzac's interest in the occult sciences, as well as in Catherine's political credo, comes to the fore. In the final chapter Lorenzo Ruggieri's long exposition of the philosophy animating his researches is too diffuse for the taste of most readers; but in its characterization of Catherine, Charles IX, Marie Touchet, the Ruggieri, and a number of well-grouped minor personages the story is excellent. And the plot holds the reader's interest in spite of apparently excessive documentation; as for the documentation itself, it is essential to the general purpose of the *étude*. As to the historicity of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, examination of source materials and comparison with modern authorities show that Balzac generally succeeds in infusing into his story the spirit of the "distracted and dishevelled times" in which Catherine lived.²⁵

Most critics agree that *Le Martyr calviniste* is the best of the three parts, and at first I was decidedly of their opinion; now, upon further acquaintance, I am inclined to rate *Le Secret des Ruggieri* at least a very close

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. ix-x.

²⁵ For further discussion of this point, see pp. 365-66, below.

second. The story of *Le Martyr calviniste* centers around the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560 and shows Catherine vacillating between Protestantism and Catholicism—sacrificing Christophe Lecamus, the young son of a furrier, to political expediency. The love story of Christophe and Babette Lallier is subordinated to the historical events, perhaps too much so for the general reader. For Balzac's own summary of the key situation, originally included in the text of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* but omitted from the *Souverain* and subsequent editions, see page 347, below. An anonymous reviewer, already quoted, says of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, but with *Le Martyr calviniste* in mind:

No more harrowing or haunting picture has ever been painted of distracted and dishevelled times than the eloquent romancer, imitating the *Quentin Durward* of Scott, has painted in this book. . . . The slender love story on which all this is hung is too frail to support the weight of the tragic events through which it meanders; but the reader cares nothing for this, so powerfully absorbing are the real events of the reign.²⁶

Garnand and Dargan find in the story parallels with *Old Mortality* and *Woodstock*, and Dargan also points out resemblances to *The Abbot* and *The Fortunes of Nigel*.²⁷

The "Introduction" (dated by Balzac, January, 1842, and first published in 1843) was written primarily to demonstrate the thesis underlying the three stories and to justify uniting them in a single *Etude philosophique*. This introductory essay is too long and ponderous for the ordinary reader of historical novels; the author seems to be too anxious to make a display of his erudition, bolstering up his thesis with a multitude of factual details and references to learned works. Although Baldensperger refers to Balzac's labor as "une documentation de fortune, que de doctes noms cités n'empêchent pas d'être précaire," Bourgeois, on the other hand, is sufficiently impressed to call it "presque digne d'un savant historien professionnel." For has he not utilized the *Mémoires* of Brantôme, the Protestant writers, Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, "et même, selon une bonne méthode scientifique, les registres du Parlement et de la Cour des Comptes"? In addition, there are those wordy and tiresome authors, Voûté and Du Tillet, whose completeness is their virtue. Bourgeois lets his enthusiasm overflow when he arrives at De Thou:

²⁶ *The Critic*, XXIII (January 12, 1895), 26.

²⁷ See E. P. Dargan, "Scott and the French Romantics," *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 618-19.

Parmi les références, les plus importantes renvoient à l'histoire universelle de de Thou. Balzac ici encore a prouvé la solidité de son jugement par une confiance bien placée. Il cite sans cesse de Thou, il l'appelle le Tacite des Valois et salue à bon droit en lui un de nos historiens les meilleurs quoique les moins connus (il écrivit en latin), un de nos esprits les plus forts et les plus justes.²⁸

We shall discover later that Balzac's erudition was not so profound as he wished it to appear, but at least the "Introduction" convinces most readers that he has a serious purpose.

IV

Both from the political side and from the occult side it is not hard to see why Balzac classified the novel (or novels) with the *Etudes philosophiques*. In his *Pensées, sujets, fragmens* we find this jotting:

19 Xbre 1836.—Résolu d'introduire dans les *Etudes philosophiques* autant de scènes historiques qu'il y a de siècles depuis l'invasion des Francs jusqu'en 1800, pour montrer le ravage des hautes idées dans la politique, ce qui a fait l'esprit des siècles, l'antagonisme, et cela dans les proportions du Secret des Ruggieri. Environ 15 scènes. —Les *Ruggieri* seront complétés par *Les deux Rêves*, dans l'édition future.²⁹

When Saintsbury speaks of a "rejected preface" as showing the unity of Balzac's novel, he really means a part of the 1842 "Introduction" omitted in editions subsequent to Souverain.³⁰ From this rejected passage a few ideas concern us here. For, when the author of the *Etudes philosophiques* "eut résolu d'indiquer la pensée qui avait conduit chaque siècle antérieur au nôtre afin de démontrer l'activité des idées et leur puissance," he thought naturally of Catherine; and his opinion of this great queen had been formed as early as the publication of *Le Petit Souper* (i.e., *Les Deux Rêves*) in 1830. Perhaps, says Balzac, if this story had been entitled *Dialogue de Catherine de Médicis et de Robespierre*, then "l'analogie frappante entre les exigences politiques du principe de la domination démocratique et du principe de la domination monarchique" would have been better understood. As for the other two stories:

Le Martyr calviniste et *le Secret des Ruggieri* montrent Catherine de Médicis aux prises avec la première et la dernière grande difficulté de sa vie politique; mais en voyant combien de développemens exigent ces deux détails et combien de faits, d'hommes et d'intérêts s'y rattachent; en observant surtout avec quelle

²⁸ N. Bourgeois, *Balzac historien français et écrivain régionaliste*, p. 64.

²⁹ *Pensées, sujets, fragmens* (éd. J. Crépet), p. 138.

³⁰ See p. 282, n. 11.

sobriété l'auteur a procédé, l'on apercevra les énormes travaux auxquels doivent se condamner les historiens qui voudront entreprendre la peinture vraie de la France pendant la Réformation, ouvrage auquel travaille, dit-on, M. le marquis de Pastoret depuis quinze années.

Evidently, for this period two historians are necessary, a Protestant and a Catholic, since impartiality, "dans le sens que l'on donne à ce mot," is not permitted. And finally: "Quant à la conclusion à tirer de ces études sur Catherine, elle sera claire et visible: le pouvoir ne doit jamais être astreint aux règles qui constituent la morale privée. Cette maxime est directement contraire à celles [*sic*] avec laquelle la Bourgeoisie voudrait aujourd'hui diriger la politique des Etats."³¹ This is Balzac's best statement of the unifying purpose of his *étude*. He feels that historians have misunderstood the character of Catherine, and he tries to support the thesis that her desire for domination was justified.

Even in *Les Deux Rêves*, as Balzac suggests in the passage just discussed, this vindication of Catherine was begun. In view of the general thesis the first of "the two dreams" is the more important. For example:

—Ma raison est confondue, dis-je à la reine. Vous vous applaudissez d'un acte que trois générations condamnent, flétrissent et ... —Ajoutez, reprit-elle, que toutes les plumes ont été plus injustes envers moi que ne l'ont été mes contemporains. Nul n'a pris ma défense. Je suis accusée d'ambition, moi riche et souveraine. Je suis taxée de cruauté, moi qui n'ai sur la conscience que deux têtes tranchées. Et pour les esprits les plus impartiaux je suis peut-être encore un grand problème. Croyez-vous donc que j'aie été dominée par des sentiments de haine, que je n'aie respiré que vengeance et fureur? Elle sourit de pitié.—J'étais calme et froide comme la raison même. J'ai condamné les Huguenots sans pitié, mais sans emportement, ils étaient l'orange pourrie de ma corbeille. Reine d'Angleterre, j'eusse jugé de même les Catholiques, s'ils y eussent été séditionnaires. Pour que notre pouvoir eût quelque vie à cette époque, il fallait dans l'Etat un seul Dieu, une seule Foi, un seul Maître. Heureusement pour moi, j'ai gravé ma justification dans un mot. Quand Birague m'annonça faussement la perte de la bataille de Dreux:—Eh! bien, nous irons au prêche, m'écriai-je. De la haine contre ceux de la Religion?

Her real hatred, she insists, was for the Cardinal de Lorraine and his soldier-brother. They spied upon her and wished to snatch the crown from her children. "Si nous n'avions pas fait la Saint-Barthélemi, les Guises l'eussent accomplie à l'aide de Rome et de ses moines." The Ligue, strong only in her old age, would have begun as early as 1573. Luther

³¹ *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*, I, xlii-xlvii.

and Calvin, she continues, gave birth in Europe to a spirit of investigation which inevitably led the nations to examine everything. The aim of the reformers was nothing less than the annihilation of religion and royalty, and over their wreck the middle classes of all lands were to join in a common compact. "Ce fut un duel à outrance entre deux géants, la Saint-Barthélemy n'y fut malheureusement qu'une blessure." Catherine's misfortune consists in having no peers to judge her actions; fools are in the majority, and these two considerations explain everything. If she committed faults, she was, after all, only a woman. And why were there no men superior to their century? The Duc d'Albe, Philippe II, Henri IV, the Amiral de Coligny—all had their failings.

Louis XI vint trop tôt, Richelieu vint trop tard. Vertueuse ou criminelle, que l'on m'attribue ou non la Saint-Barthélemy, j'en accepte le fardeau: je resterai entre ces deux grands hommes comme l'anneau visible d'une chaîne inconnue. Quelque jour des écrivains à paradoxes se demanderont si les peuples n'ont pas quelquefois prodigué le nom de bourreaux à des victimes. Ce ne sera pas une fois seulement que l'humanité préférera d'immoler un dieu plutôt que de s'accuser elle-même.³²

Thus, the slight framework of *Les Deux Rêves*, hardly justifying the name of *nouvelle*, serves as a vehicle for political ideas which really belonged in an essay.

An essay the 1842 "Introduction" frankly is—too pedantic to fit easily into a work of fiction, but growing out of convictions which Balzac, more than a decade before, had expressed in *Les Deux Rêves*. Concerning his defense of the maxim that public and private morality are different, that "the policy of a state cannot be, and ought not to be, governed by the same considerations of duty to its neighbors as those which ought to govern the conduct of an individual," Saintsbury reacts as follows:

But it was something of a mark of that amateurishness which spoils Balzac's dealing with the subject to choose the sixteenth century for his text. For every cool-headed student of history and ethics will admit that it was precisely the abuse of this principle at this time, and by persons of whom Catherine de' Medici, if not the most blamable, has had the most blame put on her, that brought the principle itself into discredit.

The critic next poses the question: "Is the handling of this book the right and proper one for an historical novel? Can we in virtue of it rank Balzac (this is the test which he would himself, beyond all question, have ac-

³² *Les Deux Rêves*, éd. Conard, XXX, 354-57. Save for minor variations, the text is the same as that of the original edition.

cepted) a long way above Dumas and near Scott?" Saintsbury's answer is:

I must say that I can see no possibility of answer except, "Certainly not." For the historical novel depends almost more than any other division of the kind upon interest of story. Interest of story is not . . . at any time Balzac's main appeal, and he has succeeded in it here less than in most other places. He has discussed too much; he has brought in too many personages without sufficient interest of plot; but, above all, he exhibits throughout an incapacity to handle his materials in the peculiar way required. . . . In the best stories of Dumas (and the best number some fifteen or twenty at least) the interest of narrative, of adventure, of what will happen to the personages, takes you by the throat at once, and never lets you go till the end. There is little or nothing of the sort here. The three stories are excellently well-informed studies, very curious and interesting in divers ways. The "Ruggieri" is perhaps something more; but it is, as its author no doubt honestly entitled it, much more an "Etude Philosophique" (Philosophical Study) than an historical novelette. In short, this was not Balzac's way. We need not be sorry—it is very rarely necessary to be that—that he tried it; we may easily forgive him for not recognizing the ease and certainty with which Dumas trod the path. But we should be most of all thankful that he did not himself enter it frequently or ever pursue it far.³³

Saintsbury is clearly at the opposite pole from Bellessort and Wells in his estimate of Balzac as a historical novelist. Many readers will agree, at least in part, with his criticisms; on the other hand, there are some confirmed Balzicians who would not expect or want Balzac to follow the path of Dumas. Accustomed to the fact that "interest of story is not . . . at any time Balzac's main appeal," they find their compensation in the very qualities which make this novel a "philosophical study." As for plot interest itself, the present writer believes that *Le Martyr calviniste* and *Le Secret des Ruggieri* are considerably stronger than Saintsbury suggests. If we could ignore the pedantry of the "Introduction" and the slightness of *Les Deux Rêves*, would not the other two parts emerge as historical novels worthy of their author?

From the literary point of view Barrière has much good to say of the novel, comparing it favorably with *La Chronique du règne de Charles IX*; but he objects to Balzac's fanaticism and defense of Machiavellian principles, considering that "comme un traité philosophique de l'histoire de la Réformation" it is "pleine d'erreurs regrettables sur le devoir des monarques dont il excuse, dans un but politique, l'injustice et la violence ap-

³³ *Op. cit.*, pp. x-xii.

portées au maintien de l'ordre."³⁴ Baldensperger, stressing the fact that Balzac offered *Sur Catherine de Médicis* as "une véritable page d'histoire," finds the interpretation of Catherine "un peu décevante":

Avec ses trônçons peu cohérents et ses dates variées ... cette présentation soi-disant historique, avec ses citations d'autorités documentaires, ses exposés politiques et religieux, ne devient vraiment vivante qu'avec Cosme Ruggieri, l'astrologue favori, "à qui elle tient plus qu'à ses enfants." On regrette que Balzac, au lieu de chercher à comprendre, dans Catherine de Médicis, la femme et l'Italienne, s'applique à interpréter la reine contrainte, par la force des choses, de pratiquer une certaine diplomatie intérieure. "Un désir inné d'étendre la gloire et la puissance de la maison de Médicis": cette phrase de la première édition de la *Comédie humaine* aurait servi de point de départ à des considérations plus curieuses que celles qu'a développées le romancier, si Balzac avait eu la sagesse de ne pas jouer à l'augure. Une subtile Italienne, entre Napoléon, Italien francisé qui incarne l'action, et Dante, Italien tragique en qui il cherchera un guide et un garant, aurait complété la galerie que domine l'altière figure du poète de la *Divine Comédie*.³⁵

Again one wonders if the "Introduction" has not prevented *Le Martyr calviniste* and *Le Secret des Ruggieri* from receiving their just due. Attempting a more serious task than the writing of novels à la Dumas, Balzac perhaps "protested too much" and defeated his own ends. Wells reminds us that he "seems to have been one of the first to apprehend" the character of Catherine. It is not surprising to one who has studied Balzac's source materials that he should have chosen to interpret her as "la reine contrainte, par la force des choses, de pratiquer une certaine diplomatie intérieure."

V

Let us now consider the circumstances which have prompted the preparation of a critical edition of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*. Judged in comparison with *Le Père Goriot* and *Eugénie Grandet*, it is not a really great novel—and perhaps, because of its shortness, it should not be called a "novel" at all—but it is distinctly Balzacian, and a study of its composition should throw considerable light on the author's general method. The availability of both manuscript and proof sheets is particularly fortunate, for most of Balzac's revising—as well as an appreciable proportion of fresh composing—was done in the proofs. The variations in the printed editions, while significant, are by no means so numerous or so interesting as those which precede the first publication. *Le Secret des Ruggieri* offers

³⁴ See Marcel Barrière, *L'Œuvre de H. de Balzac*, pp. 408-9.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 164-65.

the student a second advantage: because it is a historical novel, he has more of an opportunity to investigate sources than is usually the case with other types of fiction. Having located a source, he can see how Balzac chose his materials and shaped them to his own ends.

My original choice of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* was due to the purchase by the University of Chicago, in 1927, of fifty-two sheets of proof extensively corrected and elaborated by Balzac in the margins and on the versos. Professor Dargan relates in "A Balzac Acquisition"³⁶ the means by which the University was enabled to possess what he rightly calls "a unique treasure." The fifty-two pages consist of *Chronique de Paris* proofs for the second and third chapters of our story—three sets of proofs for the second chapter and four for the third. After briefly describing the volume and characterizing the outstanding manuscript changes and additions, Professor Dargan expresses gratitude to Balzac for the lavishness of his corrections:

The result for posterity is that we are able, to a greater degree than with any other author, to determine the steps in his process. We pass with him into his fictional laboratory. We watch the slow heating of the furnace. We see the sorcerer, himself like one of the Ruggieri, surrounded by his crucibles. We follow his experiments, as he chooses and rejects his materials, tries this vial and that, incorporates fresh ingredients in the glowing mass, records the experiment, and finally blots the record for our admiration.

In the completeness with which it exploits such priceless materials and examines Balzac's method of documentation, the present writer's critical, or *variorum*, edition is believed to be practically unique among Balzacian studies.

As for the makeup of the Chicago volume, it is 444×345 mm. in size and consists of fifty-two sheets of various dimensions mounted in folio on hinges. It is half-bound in red *basane* and bears on the headband: "Le/Secret/de/Ruggieri/2^e partie/Epreuves." The sides are of red quadruled paper, without corners.³⁷ The front flyleaf bears the following presentation inscription:

Mon vieux camarade Albert, ne valait-il pas mieux te réserver ceci où le travail de nain auquel m'a condamné une mauvaise fée se voit bien mieux.

Tout à toi,
Honoré de Bz.

³⁶ *The University Record*, new ser., XIII (1927), 124-26.

³⁷ Freely translated from a more complete technical description furnished by M. Marcel Bouteron at the time the proofs were purchased by Gabriel Wells. His notes, which will be referred to again, are laid in the Chicago volume.

The phraseology of the *envoi* shows that Balzac appreciated the importance of the proofs for a student of his method. The recipient of the volume was an old school-friend of Collège de Vendôme days, Albert Marchand (or Marchant) de la Ribellerie, to whom Balzac in 1846 dedicated *Le Réquisitionnaire*. Accompanying the proofs is a receipt (dated September 27, 1836) showing that Marchand de la Ribellerie had delivered a manuscript to the publisher. Probably, according to M. Bouteron, this was a fragment of Volume XII or Volume XVII of the *Etudes philosophiques*. Likewise preserved with the Chicago proofs is a letter to Marchand postmarked at Paris on February 10 and at Tours on February 11, 1837:

Mon vieux camarade,

Il y a pour toi Bureau restant, aux Messageries un livre d'épreuves, moins coquet que celui de Loiseau, mais plus curieux, va le quérir, et tu verras que je ne t'ai point oublié.

L'infâme Berrue avait mal enveloppé [*sic*] le cadre, il y a d'horribles réparations; mais tu le verras à l'exposition dans toute sa gloire et moi dedans, je ne sais si je verrai l'exposition, je pars pour Milan dans trois jours.

t. à toi

honoré de Bz

Again M. Bouteron explains: "Le livre d'épreuves est le manuscrit acquis par M^r Wells; le cadre est un cadre acheté par Balzac, pendant un séjour en Touraine, en novembre 1836 et destiné à encadrer le portrait de Balzac par Louis Boulanger exposé en 1837."

The subsequent history of the proofs may be briefly sketched. They became the property of the Baron Auvray; on the latter's death they were sold at auction at Tours, June 29-30, 1920. They were acquired by the bookseller Conard, who resold them to the Parisian bookseller Davis; thence they passed into the hands of Gabriel Wells and William H. Royce, through whose agency they became the crowning jewel of Chicago's Balzac collection.

A treasure they are, indeed; but the fact remains that without the resources of Chantilly our knowledge concerning the composition of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* would still be very incomplete. For in the Lovenjoul Collection (under the *cote* A 210) there exist the original manuscript, forty-four pages long, and an additional one hundred and sixteen sheets of corrected proof,³⁸ besides four full pages, hand-written, which were

³⁸ These proofs were set up by Werdet (or rather, by Baudouin, his printer) for publication in Vol. XIII of the *Etudes philosophiques*. We shall call them "Werdet proofs."

really part of an insertion in the proofs but which, by mistake, were bound in with the manuscript proper. The volume bears on its flyleaf the inscription: "Offert à Madame la Comtesse de Sanseverino en témoignage de l'admiration de l'auteur De Balzac." Balzac had presented the volume, which in binding and general appearance resembles the one at Chicago, to the Comtesse Serafina Sanseverino, nee Porcia, in 1837.³⁹ After having been in the Sanseverino family for several decades, the proofs, like so many other precious Balzacian relics, became the property of the Vicomte Spoelberch de Lovenjoul.

The exact relationship of the Chicago proofs to those at Chantilly will be dealt with later. However, it may be said at once that we are entirely dependent upon the Chantilly volume for our knowledge of Chapter I, which comprises approximately half the story, and that the Chicago proofs of Chapters II and III represent an intermediate stage between the Chantilly proofs and the first publication. Lovenjoul, after studying the material he had acquired, suspected the existence of intermediary proofs. Believing that information from the family who had originally owned the first lot might aid him in his search for the others, he made inquiries of a certain C. Renman. The following reply, which is laid in the Chantilly volume and has not hitherto been published, put an end to his hopes:

Paris le 7 mars 95
9 rue Richepanse

Monsieur le Vicomte,

La Duchesse Litta ayant été malade, ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui que je reçois sa réponse à la question que je lui ai posée relativement à l'existence d'un tome II faisant suite au manuscrit de Balzac dont vous vous êtes rendu acquéreur. Voici ce qu'elle m'écrit à ce sujet:

"La Marquise Visconti-Sanseverino m'a de nouveau déclaré n'avoir jamais vu d'autre manuscrit de Balzac. Le volume acquis par M. de Spoelberck [*sic*] fut donné à sa mère par l'auteur lui-même, tel qu'il est, c'est-à-dire tout relié

³⁹ It was to this charming Milanese lady, living with her husband in Paris in the winter of 1837, that Balzac dedicated *Les Employés*. On the occasion of the author's first visit to Italy in February, 1837, she gave him letters of introduction to her brother, Prince Alfonso Serafino Porcia, and to her friend, Mme Claire Maffei. Professor Dargan (in an unpublished article, "Balzac and His Gina") says that Prince Porcia became "Gregorio" in Balzac's *Les Fantaisies de la Gina*, which he believes was probably written in May or June, 1838, but might even have been composed during the 1837 visit to Italy. On these various points, see also Conard notes, XIX, 369; Henry Prior, "Balzac à Milan. 1837," *Revue de Paris*, XXXII (1925), 283-302 and 602-20; and Bouteron's edition of *Les Fantaisies de la Gina* in the "Cahiers balzaciens," No. 2.

d'une reliure évidemment française. Il est probable qu'un second volume ait été offert en hommage à quelque autre personne: mais la Marquise croit pouvoir affirmer qu'il ne vint jamais dans la famille Sanseverino. Il aurait dû par contre exister des lettres adressées à ses parents par le célèbre auteur: mais il n'a pas été possible d'en retrouver une seule, malgré les recherches les plus diligentes."

Je regrette de ne pas pouvoir vous communiquer une information de nature à vous satisfaire davantage comme collectionneur et je m'empresse de vous renouveler, Monsieur le Vicomte, l'expression de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

C. Renman

We know now that the object of Lovenjoul's unsuccessful search was the volume presented by Balzac to Albert Marchand de la Ribellerie.

VI

So much for the history of the manuscript and proof sheets after they left the author's possession. But what were the conditions under which the story was written? *Le Secret des Ruggieri* has interested more than one Balzacian because of the novelist's claim that he wrote it in a single night.⁴⁰ In a letter⁴¹ dated "Chaillot, 30 septembre—1^{er} octobre 1836," to Mme Hanska, we read: "Pour savoir jusqu'où va mon courage, il faut vous dire que *le Secret des Ruggieri* a été écrit en une seule nuit. Pensez à cela quand vous le lirez." Balzac then boasts of the speed with which *La Vieille Fille* and other stories were written, "trois jours" or "trois nuits" being a favorite working unit. Many an author will envy him such fertility of invention, unless he reads on: "Ce qui me tue, c'est les corrections." By corrections, of course, Balzac means corrections on proof sheets. He goes on to say: "Enfin, au moment que je vous écris, j'ai devant moi les épreuves accumulées de quatre ouvrages différents qui doivent paraître en octobre ... J'ai promis à Werdet de faire paraître sa troisième livraison d'*Études Philosophiques* ce mois-ci, et aussi" In this third *livraison*, *Le Secret des Ruggieri* was to be included. When the letter was written, Balzac was living "dans l'ancienne mansarde de Jules Sandeau, à Chaillot," where he had "taken refuge" the thirtieth of September. He was profoundly discouraged: "N'être plus retenu dans la vie que par le sentiment du devoir! Je suis entré dans la mansarde où je suis avec la conviction d'y mourir épuisé de travail. J'ai cru que je

⁴⁰ Concerning the validity of this claim, see below, p. 304, n. 48, and p. 326.

⁴¹ *Lettres à l'Etrangère*, I, 346-52. The various passages quoted below occur in this one long letter.

le supporterai mieux que je ne fais." For more than a month he had been rising at midnight and going to bed at six o'clock, and had imposed on himself a strict regimen in food as well as work. He was not well: "... non-seulement je sens des faiblesses que je ne puis décrire, mais tant de vie communiquée au cerveau amène de singuliers troubles Même dans mon lit, il me semble que ma tête tombe à gauche ou à droite, et je suis, quand je me lève, emporté par un poids énorme qui serait dans ma tête." With all his discouragements he could still work, and he had much to tell Mme Hanska of his performances, past and future. Finally, however, it was time to call a halt; his candles were paling, and he had proof sheets to correct:

Les épreuves attendent, il faut se plonger dans les écuries d'Augias de mon style et balayer les fautes. Ma vie n'offre plus que la monotonie du travail, que varie le travail lui-même. Je suis comme le vieux colonel autrichien qui parlait de son cheval gris et de son cheval noir à Marie-Antoinette; je suis tantôt sur l'un, tantôt sur l'autre, six heures sur *les Ruggieri*, six heures sur *l'Enfant maudit*, six heures sur *la Vieille Fille*. De temps en temps je me lève, je contemple cet océan de maisons que ma fenêtre domine, depuis l'École-Militaire jusqu'à la barrière du Trône, depuis le Panthéon jusqu'à l'Étoile, et après avoir humé l'air, je me remets au travail.

Such were the physical conditions under which *Le Secret des Ruggieri* was composed and its proofs corrected.

VII

The plot of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* is very simple, centering around the fears of Charles IX that Catherine intends to poison him. Perfectly evident to all the court is the fact that the twenty-four-year-old king—weakened in health, morbidly brooding over the horrors of St. Bartholomew's Day—has not long to live. For it is the latter part of October, 1573; if Catherine really wishes Charles out of the way, she has only to wait, but nonetheless his mind is obsessed with the dread of death by poisoning. The action of our story, the *drame* proper, may be said to begin with an after-supper court scene and to end the following afternoon with the interrogation of the Ruggieri brothers by Charles. The court scene gives an interesting picture of the strict etiquette enforced by Catherine. Everyone sits or stands, near or far away from royalty, according to his rank; and only the most intimate of the courtiers dare address the king. Charles is in somber mood, fatigued after a day of hunting; and the sad, pious Elizabeth of Austria is no doubt thinking of Charles's infatuation for his

mistress, Marie Touchet, who has recently borne him a son. The atmosphere is so strained that most of the courtiers retire early, leaving only a few intimates in the presence of Charles and the queen-mother. Soon Catherine herself withdraws, making a secret sign that is understood by the Gondi brothers, Albert and Charles. The former has been appointed Maréchal de Retz, and the latter is master of the king's wardrobe; both are devoted to Catherine's interests. Charles IX meanwhile is exchanging glances with his own special followers, among whom is the Maréchal de Tavannes. It suits the secret plans of both Catherine and her son that a reconnoitering party should be formed which would include the Gondi brothers and Tavannes. "Vauriennerie" is the term used to describe their proposed activities: Charles IX and his party will explore the Saint-Honoré quarter, playing pranks upon innocent bourgeois, climbing roofs, and in general spying upon the inhabitants of the quarter. Charles says that he will pay a surprise visit to Marie; but near her home he is attracted by a single lighted window in the garret of a house belonging to René, the court perfumer. Now René has the reputation of being a master poisoner; Catherine may have employed him; Charles determines to investigate. While Albert and Charles de Gondi perch like cats upon the edge of a roof, Charles IX and Tavannes go ahead. They climb up to the lighted window; what they see is the laboratory of Catherine's astrologers, Cosimo and Lorenzo Ruggieri. After looking and listening for a while, Charles enters and has these men arrested and lodged in Marie Touchet's house in charge of a few soldiers of the king's own guard. Of his subsequent nocturnal activities, the most important is a secret interview with Catherine in his workshop shortly before dawn.

The next afternoon Charles visits Marie, who is expecting him. Their conversation shows in really charming fashion the genuineness of Marie's love for him and the young king's delight in having one refuge from his cares, where he may enjoy the companionship of his mistress and their little son. But Marie is curious about the strange prisoners in her house, and she must hear Charles's own story of the events of the night before. Then the Ruggieri are brought in and questioned. Charles had talked with them a little while on the previous evening and later had had their laboratory carefully searched. He had found no proofs of guilt; instead he is fascinated by the *grand œuvre* in which the brothers are engaged, and seeks to know more of its mysteries. The imposing old Lorenzo answers the king's questions with perfect self-possession; and when Charles finally leaves, the "secret des Ruggieri" is still undivulged.

This is the chronological order of events. But in what order does Bal-

zac tell his story? He begins Chapter I *in medias res* with Albert and Charles de Gondi perched on the edge of a roof. Then, in order to explain why they are there, he loops back to the court scene at the Louvre; and then, in order to explain that scene, he loops back and presents the political situation of the previous six months. The first chapter is as long as Chapters II and III put together, for it contains nearly all the exposition of the story. Chapter II opens with a description of Marie Touchet's house and some characterization of the quarter in which she lived, partly repeating and reinforcing material of Chapter I. It is the day after the court scene; Marie is waiting for Charles to appear and tell her what has happened. From then on the story follows the order so briefly sketched in the preceding paragraph.

One of the most interesting facts I have discovered about the composition of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* is that Balzac wrote the manuscript version of Chapters II and III⁴² first of all; had them set up in galley proof; then wrote the manuscript of Chapter I in shorter form than we now have it; had it set up in galley proof; and then (in the galleys) expanded Chapter I to about its present length and had it set up in the Werdet page proof before going on to correct the first galley proofs of Chapters II and III.⁴³ At many points in the present study we shall see the effects which this order of composition had upon the construction of the story. As evidence that Chapter I was the last of the three chapters to be composed and that it could not have been written in the same night as the others, two facts stand out as most important: First, in the manuscript and first galley proofs of Chapters II and III, the younger Ruggieri brother was called not Cosimo but Claude, and in the next set of proofs the name had to be changed many times. In the manuscript of Chapter I, however, the name was Cosimo from the first. Second, Balzac in the first galley proofs of Chapter II had not decided who were to be Charles's companions on the nocturnal excursion. He wrote in the name Cypierre and left a row of dots to show that he would fill in more later. But in the manuscript of Chapter I he has made up his mind; the Gondi brothers and Tavannes are already playing their roles, and the proofs of Chapter II must be corrected to correspond.

⁴² Except for a little more than four pages of manuscript, at the very end of the story, added in the revision of the first set of Chicago proofs and then elaborated in succeeding sets.

⁴³ A study of the proof sheets shows also that Chapter II was corrected and expanded, probably to its final length, before the first proofs of Chapter III were corrected. For evidence of the order of proof corrections, see p. 312, n. 51, and p. 326, below.

VIII

Before discussing further the manifold corrections, elaborations, and rearrangements by means of which Balzac built up his original manuscript material to approximately double its length for the *Chronique de Paris* publication, it may be well to describe briefly the appearance of the manuscript and corrected proof sheets and to indicate a few of the technical problems which required solution before a critical edition could be made.

Both in the manuscript itself and in the marginal corrections on proof sheets the *ratures* afford an intimate glimpse into Balzac's thought-processes while composing. With strokes of the pen that frequently resemble brush strokes and almost blot out the original writing, or by means of horizontal spirals or crosshatching or other devices of the sort, our author has crossed out letters, words, and occasionally whole clauses or sentences. In these *ratures* we may see him struggling for a word and rejecting it half-written, only to employ it again later in the sentence; a short phrase may suggest an idea too extended for its original placing but capable of elaboration in a separate sentence. Sometimes substitutions or additions are made after a whole line or several lines are written, in which case we find interlinear or marginal corrections. More frequently the author becomes dissatisfied as soon as the word or phrase is written—perhaps even before it is completed—and changes it at once, either interlinearly or in the regular line of writing. Some notion of all this may be gained by examining the page of proof reproduced as the frontispiece of the present volume.⁴⁴

In the critical edition of which the "Introduction," revised, constitutes the present study, an analysis of all the *ratures* in manuscript and proofs would have been a well-nigh endless task; and, more important, the mass of material might easily have obscured the main drive of the successive stages of correction. Consequently, it was decided that *ratures* in the proofs would not, in general, be recorded or discussed but that by a special space-economizing method⁴⁵ the manuscript *ratures* would be incorporated, without discussion, into the text.

⁴⁴ The new passages inserted in this page of proof are more straightforward in composition than is usually the case. The page was selected not for the frequency of *ratures* but for reasons explained on pp. 331-32, below.

⁴⁵ In part suggested by Pierre Masson's critical edition of *La Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*. It is hoped that by means of this method a student examining the edition proper will be able to trace and characterize for himself the various stages by which Balzac arrived at the text which he was willing to have set up in the first proofs.

In the present study, as well as in the critical edition proper, it will often be necessary for us to identify accurately the particular set or sets of proofs from which a given reading is taken. Roman numerals will be used to designate which of the three chapters is concerned, and capital letters in alphabetical order will distinguish the successive sets of proofs. "Pr II A" means the first set of proofs of Chapter II; "Pr II B" the second; etc. When a set of proofs just preceding the journal form has not been preserved, but the readings can be reconstituted by means of the journal text, the capital letter is inclosed in brackets. Where it is quite clear that more than one set has been lost (this is true of Chapter I), a plus sign is used to indicate the fact; e.g., "Pr I [C+]." Balzac's handwritten corrections on a set of proofs are indicated by the notation "ms" after the capital letter identifying the set thus corrected. If the compositor follows Balzac's directions, the text of "Pr II A ms" will be identical with that of "Pr II B"; or, if "Pr II B" does not include that particular part of the chapter, "Pr II A ms" agrees with "Pr II C" or "Pr II D," etc., as the case may be. The number of proofs for a given text varies in different parts of the chapter.

The principal problem to be settled for the critical edition was that of enabling the reader to trace the evolution of the text from its manuscript form down to the definitive Conard edition. Wherever all the versions followed the same general order, the solution was simple, namely, to reproduce the manuscript text on the left-hand pages and the corresponding *Chronique de Paris* text on the right-hand pages immediately opposite. Two sets of notes were likewise required: the first set, immediately under the manuscript text, to describe Balzac's adaptation of source materials as well as to record and discuss the proof variations; and the second, on the opposite page, to record the variants in the volume publications (Werdet, Souverain, Furne, and Conard) as compared with the journal form. For convenient reference the lines of the *Chronique de Paris* text were numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the story: lines 1-1019 represent Chapter I; lines 1020-1621, Chapter II; and lines 1622-2113, Chapter III.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The story is divided into only two chapters in the Werdet ed.; in the Souverain there are five; and in the Furne and Conard there is no division into chapters at all. Since the line numbers of the *Chronique de Paris* text run consecutively from beginning to end, we can neglect these variations in chapter divisions in referring to the printed editions. By Chapters I, II, and III, we shall consistently mean the chapters as they appeared in the journal publication.

In four special cases the method discussed above was rendered impracticable by reason of the length of insertions in one of the proofs. Accordingly, a series of appendixes was prepared with the text of the proof insertion on the left-hand pages and the *Chronique de Paris* text on the opposite pages, with notes carrying the texts forward, as in the body of the edition. In order to keep each chapter a unit, the appendixes were inserted at the end of the chapter concerned rather than at the end of the volume: Appendixes I A, I B, and I C after Chapter I, and Appendixes II A and II B after Chapter II. For the edition proper the appendixes were indispensable, and even in the present "Introduction" we shall continue to identify these long passages as the "Appendix II A insertion" or the "Appendix I B transposition," as the case may be.⁴⁷

In the following sections an attempt is made to furnish a guide to the larger problems of construction which arose as Balzac expanded and revised the successive chapters. Each chapter has its own particular interest. Chapter II, the first to be composed, contains a good deal of description; hence the notes of this chapter will pay special attention to stylistic variations. In Chapter III we shall be concerned with Lorenzo Ruggieri's philosophy and with the problem of bringing the story to a close. Chapter I includes most of the documentation and requires radical rearrangements before publication in the *Chronique de Paris*. These involved transpositions and Balzac's use of source materials will be discussed last of all.

IX

The earliest preserved manuscript version of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*⁴⁸ begins with a description of Marie Touchet's house. Knowing that description was Balzac's *bête noire*, and possessing false starts for Chapters I and III which show that he found any new division of the story hard to write, we are not surprised to discover that frequent changes, many of them stylistic, were made in the successive proofs of this opening description.

The first manuscript sentence of Chapter II is a typical Balzacian beginning, for it locates a street—and expresses an etymologist's interest in the name—in preparation for placing and describing a particular house

⁴⁷ Appen. I B, the second of the series, represents a very long transposition, which will be discussed below, pp. 337-42.

⁴⁸ The rough draft of Chapter II and a part of Chapter III are all of the finished story that Balzac could rightfully claim to have written in a single night, since they were set up in proofs before Chapter I was composed.

on that street. The sentence follows, exactly as Balzac wrote it: "La rue de l'autriche ou d'autruche, car les plus savans auteurs ne sont pas d'accord sur cette etymologie, était une rue du vieux Paris qui longeait l'ancien Louvre." Although this sentence was set up in Pr II A, it was not preserved with the rest of Pr II A ms in the Chantilly volume, for the reason that Chapter I (composed in the meantime) had treated the same material in greater detail. Because it was the opening sentence, Balzac easily snipped it off with his scissors as he pasted columns of proof in the middle of large pages, ready for marginal corrections. Elsewhere in the description he blots out unwanted Pr II A text with brushlike strokes of his pen.

Most of the significant revisions were effected in the manuscript corrections to the first set of proofs (i.e., Pr II A ms) and were embodied in the next set (Pr II B) only to be further corrected later. For the present let us content ourselves with examining only the first and second stages of the text arranged in parallel columns, with italics to indicate substitutions, insertions, or omissions, and with broken brackets in both texts to indicate the passages transposed. The latter are numbered in the margins according to their order in the first column. Boldface type indicates transpositions within a given passage. (In the MS, Pr II A text below, as in all later examples of readings from the manuscript plus the first set of proofs, we shall neglect minor peculiarities of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the manuscript and use the proof-sheet version as accepted by Balzac and maintained in later proofs. For certain words, like *âme*, the printer himself determined what form was to be used; where the first Werdet proofs print *âme*, the *Chronique de Paris* proofs print *ame*, with no special directions from the author.)

MS, Pr II A

Pr II A ms, B

Vers le milieu de cette rue étroite et sombre se trouvait un petit hôtel bâti entre cour et jardin. La cour n'avait pas cinquante pieds carrés, <le jardin était un jardin de Paris, vingt-cinq perches au plus; mais les fleurs rares y abondaient, une vigne y tapis-
 (1) *sait les murailles; au milieu s'élevait un pin argenté; au fond étaient des tilleuls. La maison*

La petite maison où demeurait la dame de Belleville et où Charles IX avait déposé ses prisonniers, était l'avant-dernière dans la rue de l'Autruche, du côté de la rue Saint-Honoré. <La porte de la rue, flanquée de deux petits pavillons en brique, semblait fort simple dans un temps où les portes et leurs dessus étaient si curieusement façonnés; elle se composait de (3)
deux pilastres en pierre taillée en pointe de diamant, le cintre représentait une femme cou-

- avait un seul étage au-dessus d'un rez-de-chaussée, et cet étage couronné par une frise sculptée supportait un toit très élevé percé de trois croisées en saillie, ornées de tympans et de chambranles que le ciseau avait couvert de dentelles. Chacune des trois croisées du premier étage se recommandait également par ses broderies en pierre de taille que la brique des murs
- (1) faisait parfaitement ressortir. Au rez-de-chaussée la porte d'entrée qui s'élevait sur un perron délicatement construit et dont la tribune offrait un M et un C mariés dans un lacqs d'amour, était en bossages vermiculés, ainsi que la croisée qui se trouvait à droite et à gauche. La façade du jardin offrait les mêmes décorations. Des deux côtés la croisée du milieu avait un joli balcon travaillé. > <La cour
- (2) était pavée à la vénitienne. > <La porte de la rue flanquée de deux petits pavillons en brique n'avait rien de remarquable dans un temps où les portes et leurs dessus étaient si curieusement façonnées. C'était des bossages simples. Le cintre de la porte représentait une femme couchée
- (3) sur une corne d'abondance. La porte était en bois garni de ferrures énormes, il y avait un guichet pour examiner ceux qui frappaient, et chacun des pavillons logeait un concierge. Il y avait le concierge de jour et le concierge de nuit. > Malgré le goût exquis qui respirait dans
- ché qui tenait une corne d'abondance. La porte garnie de ferrures énormes avait, à la hauteur de l'œil, un guichet pour examiner ceux qui demandaient à entrer. Chacun des pavillons logeait un concierge, car le plaisir extrêmement capricieux du roi Charles exigeait un concierge le jour, un la nuit. > <La maison avait une petite cour pavée à la vénitienne, > <et un jardin d'environ trente perches où les fleurs les plus rares abondaient, une vigne tapissait les murailles, au milieu s'élevait un pin argenté, dans le fond se trouvait un couvert de tilleuls. La maison élevée d'un étage au-dessus du rez-de-chaussée, était couronnée par une frise sculptée sur laquelle s'appuyait un toit à quatre pans dont le sommet formait une plate forme. Ce toit était percé de trois croisées en saillie, ornées de tympans et de chambranles que le ciseau avait dentelés et couvert d'arabesques. Chacune des trois croisées du premier étage se recommandait également par ses broderies de pierre, que la brique des murs faisait ressortir. Au
- (1) rez-de-chaussée, un double perron décoré fort délicatement et dont la tribune se distinguait par un M et un C mariés dans un lacqs d'amour, menait à une porte d'entrée en bossages vermiculés, système de décor qui se retrouvait dans la croisée de droite et dans celle de gauche. La façade du jardin, semblable à celle de la cour, offrait comme elle un joli balcon travaillé qui surmontait la porte et embellissait la croisée du milieu. Des deux côtés, les ornemens de cette croisée montaient jusqu'à la frise, ce qui simulait un petit pavillon en pierre, nommé, je crois, une lanterne. > <Les appuis des autres croisées étaient incrustés de marbres rares encadrés
- (4) dans la pierre. > Malgré le goût exquis qui

(4) cette maison <où les appuis de chaque croisée étaient incrustés de marbres rares encadrés dans la pierre,> elle avait une physionomie triste. Le jour y était obscurci par la hauteur des maisons voisines, il y régnait un profond silence; mais ce silence, cette ombre, cette mélancolie de solitude faisaient du bien à l'âme. C'était un cloître où l'on se recueille, ou bien la jolie maison seulette où l'on aime. Ce logis appartenait à une femme d'une rare beauté qui se nommait Marie et qui n'aima qu'un homme; cet homme était le roi Charles IX. Qui ne devinerait pas maintenant les recherches intérieures de cette retraite, seul lieu de son royaume où l'avant-dernier Valois pouvait épancher son âme, dire ses douleurs, déployer son goût pour les arts, se livrer à la poésie qu'il aimait, affections contrariées. Là seulement, sa grande âme et sa haute valeur étaient appréciées; là seulement il était heureux père.

respirait dans cette maison, elle avait une physionomie triste; le jour y était obscurci par la hauteur des maisons voisines et par les toits de l'hôtel d'Alençon qui projetaient leur ombre sur la cour et sur le jardin; il y régnait un profond silence. Mais ce silence, cette ombre, cette solitude faisaient du bien à l'âme qui pouvait s'y livrer à une seule pensée, comme dans un cloître où l'on se recueille, ou comme on doit être dans la coite maison où l'on aime. Qui ne devinerait pas maintenant les recherches intérieures de cette retraite, seul lieu de son royaume où l'avant-dernier Valois pouvait épancher son âme, dire ses douleurs, déployer son goût pour les arts et se livrer à la poésie qu'il aimait, toutes affections contrariées par les soucis de la plus pesante des royautés. Là seulement sa grande âme et sa haute valeur étaient appréciées; là seulement il put se livrer durant quelques mois fugitifs, les derniers de sa vie, aux jouissances de la paternité, plaisirs dans lesquels il se jetait avec la frénésie que le pressentiment d'une horrible et prochaine mort imprimait à toutes ses actions.

Fundamentally the description consists of two parts, both suggested by the first sentence in the left-hand column; one is the physical makeup of the house with its accompanying garden and courtyard (cf. the manuscript form, "un petit hôtel bâti entre cour et jardin"), and the other is the atmosphere of the place (cf. "cette rue étroite et sombre"). It is the physical aspect which taxes Balzac's descriptive powers; in his anxiety to put on paper the many specific details that occur to his imagination, he loses sight of coherent order in the manuscript form. First he gives the dimensions of the court and the garden and briefly describes the flowers and trees in the latter; then he describes the house, subordinating details of its elaborate decoration to an exposition of how it was constructed; next he mentions that the courtyard was paved in the Venetian manner,

and passes on to a description of the street gate with its decorations, its peephole, and its lodges for two gatekeepers. This would seem to conclude the physical description, but in the opening sentence of the second part he interrupts himself to loop back and mention the rare marbles incrusting in the sills of the windows.

In the first proof corrections (shown in the right-hand column, above) Balzac sets about improving the organization of the foregoing description. Neglecting the court and garden for the moment, he moves the part concerning the street gate (passage 3) to its logical position near the beginning, immediately after the street location of the house. Then he transfers the short sentence concerning Venetian paving (passage 2) so that it constitutes his first mention of the courtyard; except for the adjective *petite* he neglects the dimensions. Without a sentence break he goes back to the original description of the garden and house (passage 1), but this time his main concern is elaborateness of decoration rather than construction. The sentence structure is completely changed, and particular attention to verbs is required in order to emphasize the new keynote and harmonize with it the mass of accumulated detail. Finally, Balzac painlessly amputates the clause concerning rare marbles (passage 4) from the second part and makes of it a separate sentence to conclude logically the physical description of the house.

Comparison of the two parallel columns will impress us with the minute attention to detail which accompanied Balzac's rearrangement. Verbs, nouns, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions—all are changed many times in the course of the re-writing. But it is not so much dissatisfaction with single words that motivates the correction as it is the larger purpose of keynoting properly the description and harmonizing the details so as to produce a unified, coherent, vivid effect.

The changes thus far discussed were all made in a single stage of proof correction; for our material we have depended upon the two sets of Werdet proofs preserved at Chantilly. But if we imagine that the process was complete and the description was ready for the journal publication, we do not yet know Balzac. For we have the three additional sets owned by the University of Chicago, and in each of them further modifications take place. They are not so numerous in this part of the chapter as later on; but they are, nevertheless, significant.

Now that the rearrangement is nearly complete, the new combination of ideas stimulates Balzac to add further elaboration for the third set of proofs (first set of the Chicago volume). An example is the Venetian pav-

ing of the courtyard. Balzac has had to sacrifice temporarily the manuscript idea of "le jardin était un jardin de Paris"; instead, he turns to the paving and in a few lines, inserted, transports us to a former age. The elaborated passage reads as follows in Pr II B ms, C:

La maison avait une petite cour pavée à la vénitienne; car à cette époque les voitures n'étaient pas inventées, les dames allaient à cheval ou en litière et les cours pouvaient être intérieurement magnifiques sans que les chevaux ou les voitures les gâtassent, et il faut sans cesse penser à cette circonstance pour s'expliquer l'étroitesse des rues et des cours, et beaucoup de détail des habitations de cette époque en tout pays.

The characteristic *apologie* which closes the insertion serves a double purpose: at the same time that it expresses Balzac's sociohistorical interest in the evolution of manners as reflected in architectural styles, it also provides a satisfactory transition to the description of the house proper and its ornamentation. Five minor changes are made in this insertion in the succeeding proofs.

So convenient is the transition just discussed that Balzac, continuing his revision of Pr II B, postpones the description of the garden so that in Pr II C it immediately precedes the sentence beginning "La façade du jardin, semblable à celle de la cour" (near end of passage 1 as located in the second column above). This short description assumes so many forms in its progress from the manuscript to the *Chronique de Paris*, that it may be interesting to compare them all. After the first form, italics and boldface type are used to indicate variations from the preceding form only. Since no changes were made in Pr II D ms, E, there are five versions in all:

MS, Pr II A

Le jardin était un jardin de Paris, vingt-cinq perches au plus; mais les fleurs rares y abondaient, une vigne y tapissait les murailles; au milieu s'élevait un pin argenté; au fond étaient des tilleuls.

Pr II A ms, B [transposed with rest of passage 1]

... et un jardin d'environ trente perches où les fleurs les plus rares abondaient, une vigne tapissait les murailles, au milieu s'élevait un pin argenté, dans le fond se trouvait un couvert de tilleuls.

Pr II B ms, C [transposed again, separately]

Un jardin où les fleurs les plus rares abondaient occu-

pait, derrière la maison, un espace égal en étendue à celui de la cour. C'était le jardin de ce temps. Une vigne tapissait les murailles, au milieu de quelques carrés de fleurs s'élevait un pin argenté, dans le fond se trouvait un petit bouquet d'ifs taillés.

Pr II C ms, D; D ms, E

Un jardin où **abondaient** les fleurs rares, occupait derrière la maison un espace égal en étendue à celui de la cour. *Ce jardin était distribué et planté à la mode de ce temps:* une vigne tapissait les murailles, au milieu de quelques carrés de fleurs s'élevait un pin argenté, dans le fond se trouvait un petit *bosquet* d'ifs taillés.

Pr II E ms, *C. de P.* [identical with Pr II C ms, etc., except for following insertion at the end]

... ; les murs étaient revêtus de mosaïques composées de différents cailloux assortis, et dont les dessins quoique grossiers plaisaient à l'œil par la richesse des couleurs, en harmonie avec celles des fleurs.

The Pr II B ms, C form takes a final step away from definiteness in dimensions by omitting "d'environ trente perches" and inserting "occupait, derrière la maison, un espace égal en étendue à celui de la cour." The phrase "derrière la maison" fits the transposed material into its new location just following the description of the house proper. The insertion of "C'était le jardin de ce temps" takes up again the manuscript thread of "le jardin était un jardin de Paris," temporarily neglected in Pr II A ms, B; seldom does Balzac abandon an idea permanently. In Pr II C ms, etc., the insertion is elaborated into "Ce jardin était distribué et planté à la mode de ce temps," with a colon to emphasize its function as a topic sentence for the details which follow. Finally, Pr II E ms and *C. de P.* insert, at the end, several lines which add one more touch to the accumulated richness and harmony of the description.

Despite the re-working the passage has undergone in the proofs, Balzac is still dissatisfied. On examining the variations in the volume publications, we discover that it was broken up into shorter, crisper sentences for the Souverain edition and completely re-written for the Furne. The two versions, with italics and boldface type to facilitate comparison, follow:

SOUVERAIN

Un jardin où abondaient les fleurs rares, occupait derrière la maison un espace égal en étendue à celui de la cour. *Ce jardin était distribué et planté à la mode de ce temps.* Une vigne tapissait les murailles. Au milieu de quelques carrés de fleurs s'élevait un pin argenté. Dans le fond se trouvait un petit bosquet d'ifs taillés. Les murs étaient revêtus de mosaïques composées de différents cailloux assortis, et dont les dessins quoique grossiers plaisaient à l'œil par la richesse des couleurs en harmonie avec celles des fleurs.

FURNE

Un jardin distribué planté à la mode de ce temps, et où abondaient les fleurs rares, occupait derrière la maison un espace égal en étendue à celui de la cour. Une vigne tapissait les murailles. Au milieu d'un gazon s'élevait un pin argenté. Les plate-bandes étaient séparées de ce gazon par des allées sinueuses menant à un petit bosquet d'ifs taillés qui se trouvait au fond. Les murs revêtus de mosaïques composées de différents cailloux assortis, offraient à l'œil des dessins grossiers, il est vrai, mais qui plaisaient par la richesse des couleurs en harmonie avec celles des fleurs.

By transposition and omission Balzac reduces in importance the former topic sentence, with its implied restrictions, and leaves himself free to elaborate. In the Furne text (unchanged for the Conard) we have the added detail of the lawn and the winding paths, with changes in sentence structure to show their exact placing and also to throw into greater relief the qualities of the pebbled mosaics.

After all the labor which Balzac expended upon the physical description of the house with its courtyard and garden, it is a relief to note the comparative ease with which he suggests the atmosphere and spirit of the place. Referring back to the parallel columns on pages 305-7, we find that, aside from the omission of a manuscript sentence rendered unnecessary by the composition of Chapter I, the Pr II A ms, B changes consist mainly of happy elaborations of ideas already in the text. The first of these provides a link with Chapter I, and the last reinforces very effectively the theme of the story: Haunted by his fear of a horrible death near at hand, Charles IX finds in Marie's house the one refuge where he can enjoy the privileges of a father. After the Pr II A ms, B form, shown in the second column, only a few changes (five in all) are made in succeeding proofs, and even these are of minor importance; mainly they are substitutions to avoid repetition. After the *Chronique de Paris* we find only one verbal change; the five other variations concern typographical points.

If critics are justified in deploring the heaviness of Balzac's style in descriptive passages—particularly those which list material objects in

catalogue-like profusion—at least we have in the foregoing analysis ample evidence that he realized his own deficiencies and strove to overcome them. Why else would he have composed seven distinct versions to describe a small garden which plays no part in the story except that it belongs to the house where Marie Touchet lived? In suggesting atmosphere Balzac's pen is relatively facile and sure, he works with economy of effort; where *things* are involved, he arranges and rearranges, cutting down where absolutely necessary, but more often adding details to complete the picture. Scholars differ in their classification of Balzac with the romanticists or the realists. Perhaps, on the evidence of the characteristic proof corrections analyzed above, we may say that he was a romanticist by nature,⁴⁹ a realist by conscious design and self-imposed discipline. To take a hint from the recapitulation theory of the biologists, perhaps we may discern in the development of the fictional embryo some reminders of Balzac's evolution between 1829—the year of *Les Chouans*—and 1836, when *Le Père Goriot* and *Eugénie Grandet* were already in print and the writing of *César Birotteau* was shortly to be completed.

Now that the description of the house and its surroundings is complete, Balzac allows himself three short paragraphs to prepare for the conversation between Marie and Charles which takes up nearly all the remainder of Chapter II. These transitional paragraphs assume as many as six different forms⁵⁰ in their progress from manuscript to the *Chronique de Paris*. When the process of correcting them is complete, the main difficulties of the first part of the chapter have been cleared away; at the point where Charles slips in unobserved while Marie is arranging her hair and smoothing her gown, the short second set of proofs⁵¹ comes to an end. Henceforth we pass directly from Pr II A ms to Pr II C.

Upon reaching the dialogue we are immediately struck by the greater

⁴⁹ And, of course, by literary inheritance—influence of Scott, etc.

⁵⁰ We may pass over the actual revisions, which interest us mainly because of variation in the exact dating of the story (year, day, and hour) and also because of one or two significant changes in the description of Marie herself: it seems she has black hair instead of a *chevelure d'or* (in fictional characters Balzac almost never changes the color of hair or eyes) and that she wears an *escoffion*—this is a specific sixteenth-century term—rather than a mere *chaperon*.

⁵¹ Besides proving useful to Balzac in clarifying the description of Marie Touchet's house, this special set of Werdet page proof, only 7 pages long, provides us additional evidence of the order which Balzac followed in composition and proof correction. For its pages were numbered in the 120's, and Chapter I as finally printed by Baudouin for the Werdet ed. ends with p. 118. This shows that Chapter I was expanded to its full length and set up in Werdet page proof before Pr II B was run off at all. As has already been stated, the final proofs of Chapter I have unfortunately been lost.

ease with which Balzac composed this kind of material. The comparative infrequency of manuscript *ratures* would indicate that the wording of speeches was clean cut in his imagination from the first. While in general Balzac did not succeed remarkably well as a dramatist proper, the dramatic form had a certain appeal for him, an appeal no doubt enhanced by his ability to think rapidly in terms of dialogue. As we examine proof corrections, we shall find that, in the main, they involve changes in stage directions or expansion of the dialogue by means of long or short insertions, rather than numerous stylistic variations. Occasionally the expansion of Chapter II—which twice in our edition requires a special appendix to handle the longest insertions—necessitates omitting or rearranging manuscript dialogue which only sketches or suggests the more elaborate treatment. Occasionally, too, a passage requires re-working because of the intervention of Chapter I. It is significant that stylistic difficulties account for so few variants within the speeches.

Changes in stage directions are particularly numerous in the early part of the conversation, where Marie is trying, by the force of her love and sympathy, to arouse Charles from his profound melancholy. The re-working and elaboration take place mainly in the Pr II A ms, C form, as Balzac prepares for a long insertion.

MS, Pr II A

Elle lui ôta son chapeau, son manteau, lui passa les mains dans les cheveux, comme si elle eût voulu les lui peigner avec ses doigts; il se laissa faire sans répondre, elle vit alors les traces de la profonde mélancolie qui le dévorait; elle baisa son front sillonné de rides précoces, ses joues décomposées, elle essaya quelques caresses qui n'eurent pas de succès; elle se mit à genoux devant lui, leva la tête à la hauteur de la sienne en l'étreignant doucement de ses bras mignons, et lui dit:

Pr II A ms, C

Elle lui ôta son chapeau, son manteau, lui passa les mains dans les cheveux, comme si elle eût voulu les lui peigner avec ses doigts. Charles se laissa faire sans rien répondre. Étonnée, Marie se mit à genoux pour bien étudier le pâle visage de son royal maître, et vit alors les traces d'une fatigue horrible et d'une mélancolie plus dévorante que toutes les mélancolies qu'elle avait déjà dissipées. Elle retint une larme, elle garda le silence pour ne pas irriter des douleurs qu'elle ne connaissait point par d'imprudentes paroles; elle fit ce que font les femmes tendres, elle baisa ce front sillonné de rides précoces, ces joues décomposées, en essayant d'imprimer la fraîcheur de son âme à cette âme soucieuse en la faisant passer dans de suaves caresses qui n'eurent pas de succès; elle leva la tête à la hauteur de celle du roi, qu'elle étreignit doucement de ses bras mignons, et se tint coi, le visage appuyé sur ce sein douloureux, en épiant le moment pour questionner ce malade abattu.

In the long insertion (composing Appen. II A in our edition) for which this expanded paragraph prepares, Charles compares his own lot with that of the various kings who have borne his name. Marie's role in that scene is the rather unimportant one of interlocutor; but because of the present elaboration of detail, we are early impressed with the sincere and selfless quality of her love for Charles. The expanded stage directions shown in italics in the right-hand column above do not represent pure insertions in the sense of fresh composition; nor, on the other hand, are they directly transposed from some other point in the proofs. Rather, they are a somewhat free adaptation from an MS, Pr II A passage which originally came later in the chapter; in the scissoring process involved in arranging Pr II A ms to be set up as Pr II C, the proof of the latter passage was destroyed.

The passage thus omitted illustrates very well not only the re-use, by adaptation, of stage directions no longer needed in their original placing but also other redistributions of manuscript material resulting from the composition of Chapter I. It is therefore quoted in its entirety as it appeared in its manuscript form:

Après ces paroles, le Roi tomba dans une de ces rêveries sombres qui furent les préludes et les causes de sa mort. *Marie resta silencieuse comme le Roi, tout en s'agenouillant de nouveau devant lui et lui mettant sa blonde tête dans les mains comme pour l'inviter à jouer. Elle savait les ménagemens infinis qu'elle devait employer pour dissiper cette humeur noire qui saisissait Charles IX; à quel moment sa voix douce pouvait s'élever, quand il fallait lui offrir entre deux baisers souvent mal reçus, le rebec espèce de mandoline sur laquelle le Roi s'accompagnait en chantant quelque romance faite par lui.* Moins celebre que ne le furent la duchesse d'Etampes, et Diane de Poitiers, Marie fille d'un apothicaire d'Orléans ne voulut ni titres, ni richesses ni honneurs. *Son sincère amour se déploya dans l'ombre, comme une de ces fleurs qui ne s'ouvrent qu'au coucher du soleil,* touchante harmonie avec la destinée des Valois qui s'éteignaient. Charles IX avait le pressentiment de l'extinction de la race artiste et voluptueuse des Valois, à laquelle le royaume devait tant, mais qui ne sauva point la royauté. Marie Touchet dont la beauté parfaite est célébrée par l'histoire fut la dernière des illustres femmes que l'amour plaça aux pieds du trône pour en chasser les ennuis, mais la plus heureuse en ce qu'elle ne connut point les horreurs de l'abandon. Sa modestie la protégea. [Italics distinguish the portions adapted in the elaborated stage directions of Pr II A ms, C, quoted on p. 313.]

To take up the stage directions first, we may note that Balzac in Chapter I has already described Marie as a loving, self-effacing mistress. Placing the modified stage directions at a point so early in Chapter II reinforces

the effect of the previous exposition: we are convinced of its truth, without delay, by the naturalness of Marie's actions and words. It is regrettable, however, that the characteristic detail of the *rebec* should have been lost in the transfer.

However effective we may find the new placing and the adaptation of these stage directions, they were probably not the primary reason for omitting the MS, Pr II A passage quoted above. A more important consideration is Balzac's use of the factual material of the passage. Let us center our attention for a moment on the first sentence. Conjectures as to the reasons for Charles's death appear in more specific and more elaborate form elsewhere: first, in a passage of Chapter I referring to Elizabeth of Austria, and, more especially, in part of a second long insertion in Chapter II (the one composing Appen. II B in our edition). In Chapter I we read: "Pendant l'absence de sa maîtresse, le roi s'était rapproché de sa femme avec un emportement que l'histoire a mentionné parmi les causes de sa mort."⁵² In the Pr II A ms, D insertion that constitutes our Appendix II B, Marie, rather than Elizabeth, is held responsible for Charles's excesses. Note how "une de ces rêveries sombres, etc." is elaborated:

Charles était, en effet, en proie à l'une de ces prostrations complètes de l'esprit et du corps, produites par la double fatigue de toutes les facultés, et augmentées par le découragement que cause l'étendue du malheur, l'impossibilité reconnue du triomphe, ou l'aspect de difficultés si multipliées, que le génie lui-même s'en effraye. L'abattement du roi était en raison de la hauteur à laquelle s'était monté son courage et ses idées. Puis un accès de mélancolie nerveuse engendré par la maladie elle-même, l'avait saisi au sortir du long conseil qui s'était tenu dans son cabinet. Marie devina qu'il se trouvait en proie à l'une de ces crises où tout est douloureux et importun, même l'amour; elle demeura donc agenouillée ...⁵³

Les deux amants restèrent ainsi dans le plus profond silence pendant un long moment, une de ces heures où toute réflexion fait plaie, où les nuages d'une tempête intérieure et continue voilent jusqu'aux souvenirs du bonheur. Marie se crut pour quelque chose dans cet effrayant accablement; elle se demanda, non

⁵² Quoted from *C. de P.*, II. 85-87. In the revision of Chapter I these lines were moved from place to place and their original manuscript form was modified several times in proofs. Balzac agrees with his source (i.e., Dreux du Radier; for the general question of the documentation for Chapter I, see below, pp. 349-65) in suggesting now Marie, now Elizabeth, as contributing to Charles's malady.

⁵³ The ensuing stage directions (not quoted here) are similar in tone to those already examined.

sans terreur, si les joies excessives qui marquaient son retour, si le violent amour du roi qu'elle n'avait pas la force de combattre, n'avaient pas affaibli l'esprit et le corps de Charles IX. Au moment où elle leva ses yeux, baignés de larmes comme son visage, vers son amant, elle vit des larmes dans les yeux et sur les joues décolorées du roi. Cette entente qui les unissait jusques dans la douleur, émut si fort Charles IX, qu'il sortit de sa torpeur comme un cheval éperonné. Il prit Marie par la taille, et, avant qu'elle pût deviner la pensée de Charles, il l'avait posée sur le lit de repos.

—Je ne veux plus être roi, dit-il, je ne veux plus être que ton amant, et tout oublier dans le plaisir! Je veux mourir heureux, et non dans les soucis du trône.

L'accent de ses paroles, et le feu qui brilla dans les yeux naguère éteints de Charles IX, au lieu de plaire à Marie, lui fit une peine horrible; car en ce moment elle accusait son amour de complicité avec les causes inconnues qui tuaient le roi.

Of the one hundred and four *Chronique de Paris* lines taken up by the Appendix II B insertion, nearly a third (ll. 1259-91) are thus expanded from the original short manuscript sentence. It is characteristic that Balzac should lighten the exposition by interpolating Charles's speech near the end. Marie breaks into her royal lover's melancholy mood by rising energetically with the words: "Vous oubliez vos prisonniers."

The omission of the Chapter II details concerning Marie Touchet's origin and position at court follows naturally because her *dossier* has been given at length in Chapter I. In the *Chronique de Paris*, lines 92-132 explain why Catherine favored her son's affair with Marie, the principal reason being the young woman's modesty and that of her family—in marked contrast with the ambition of Diane de Poitiers and the Duchesse d'Etampes, "qui combattaient pour leurs maisons avec les armes secrètes de l'amour."

Thus the MS, Pr II A passage quoted on page 314 is omitted in Pr II A ms, C, only to be exploited elsewhere in a variety of ways. Let us now return to the early part of the conversation between Charles and Marie. It was stated on page 314 that the introductory paragraph as expanded in Pr II A ms, C prepared the way for the long Appendix II A insertion (corresponding to ll. 1104-57 of the *Chronique de Paris*). What prompted this insertion? The germ of it we find in an MS, Pr II A passage occurring later in the chapter and maintained with almost no changes through the *Chronique de Paris*:

—Ma sorcellerie est l'amour, reprit-elle en souriant. Depuis le jour heureux où vous m'avez aimée, n'ai-je pas deviné vos pensées? Et les pensées qui vous tourmentent aujourd'hui ne sont pas dignes d'un roi.

—Suis-je roi? dit-il avec amertume.

—Ne pouvez-vous l'être? Comment fit Charles Sept, *de qui vous portez le nom?* Il écouta sa maîtresse, monseigneur, et il reconquit son royaume envahi par les Anglais, comme le vôtre l'est par ceux de la Religion. Votre dernier coup d'état vous a tracé une route qu'il faut suivre. Exterminez l'hérésie.

—Tu blâmais le stratagème, dit Charles et aujourd'hui ...

—Il est accompli, répondit-elle.

—Charles VII n'avait que des hommes à combattre, et je trouve en face de moi des idées, reprit le roi. On tue les hommes, on ne tue pas des mots! [Italicized clause is discussed below.]

The manuscript comparison of Charles IX with Charles VII, and especially Marie's observation, "de qui vous portez le nom," contains a suggestion which Balzac could not neglect. Why not extend the process in Pr II A ms, C, and see what became of the other French kings who had borne that fateful name? Material for such an expansion was not hard to find⁵⁴—if, indeed, Balzac needed to refresh his history-laden memory with regard to facts (or supposed facts) so commonly known. The insertion consists almost entirely of dialogue and requires little modification between Pr II C and the *Chronique de Paris*.

With every long insertion the problem arises of fitting it smoothly into the original text, and usually it is easier to lead up to the insertion than it is to taper away from it. Both the long insertions of Chapter II postpone Charles's report of the previous evening's activities. Accordingly, some of Marie's original manuscript questions are either crowded out or are worked in toward the end of the second insertion so as to prepare for the narrative proper. The printed proof of three manuscript speeches was destroyed in the scissoring process with which we have become acquainted. One short passage was cut out with scissors and pasted very close to the end of the Appendix II B insertion, where it resembles a small island emerging from a sea of manuscript. The ending of the Appendix II A insertion interests us because therein Balzac again adapted stage directions from manuscript material no longer needed in its original form or location. In the later proofs the passage underwent successive modifications which indicate once more that Balzac was more sure of his dialogue than of the accompanying gestures.

As for the subject matter and motivation of the Appendix II B insertion,⁵⁵ we have already analyzed (on pp. 315-16) approximately the

⁵⁴ For two sources upon which Balzac may well have drawn, see pp. 350-51, below.

⁵⁵ This insertion fills four handwritten pages in the corrections to Pr II A ms; it was first set up in type for Pr II D, the second and third sets of proof having been too short

middle third. The keynote to the first part (a little less than a third of the whole insertion in its *Chronique de Paris* form) is given in Charles's opening remark: "Nous sommes deux enfants en politique." In the manuscript version, just before the point where the long proof insertion is made, Marie, to distract Charles from his fears of poison, has given him vigorous advice: "Eh, soyez un tyran à la façon de Louis XI, inspirez une profonde terreur; imitez Don Philippe, bannissez les Italiens, donnez la chasse aux Guises et confisquez les terres des calvinistes, vous vous élevez dans cette solitude, et vous sauvez le trône. Le moment est propice, votre frère est en Pologne." In the ensuing manuscript text we do not get Charles's reaction to this advice; instead, rather abruptly and artificially, we are pulled back to the happenings of the night before. In Pr II A ms, D, Balzac remedies this defect by omitting the abrupt transitional material and beginning the long insertion as follows:

—Nous sommes deux enfants en politique, dit Charles avec amertume; hier, je songeais à tout ceci, je voulais accomplir de grandes choses; ma mère a soufflé sur mes châteaux de cartes. *Tu ne connais pas, Marie, les difficultés de détail, les impossibilités que créent les intérêts de chacun.* Ma mère m'a démontré l'inanité de mes plans; nous sommes environnés de sujets qui narguent la justice; et faute de la hache de Louis XI, de qui tu parles, il faudrait avoir le courage que veut l'assassinat; le parlement ne condamnerait pas les Guises; je suis dégouté de tout.

Et il retomba dans une morne somnolence. [Italicized sentence discussed below.]

Even in this version the subject has obviously not received the treatment it deserves. Consequently, we find that Pr II D ms, E, substitute for the italicized sentence a passage (corresponding to ll. 1234-46 of the *Chronique de Paris*) in which Balzac makes a serious attempt to analyze the political capital made of religious dissension by those who would gain power. The passage fits in nicely as a reaction to Marie's advice. The other proof variations in the first third of the insertion need not be discussed here.

The last third is less unified than the other two sections, partly because of the necessity of bringing the conversation back to Charles's nocturnal adventure. It is worth noting that into this section is introduced a scene

to include it. We may observe that the number of corrections in any given set of proofs (after the first) increases as the end of the set is approached. The effect has been compared, by Professor Dargan, to the action of a snowplow clearing away snowdrifts by a series of starts; Balzac's progress through the early pages of comparatively clean proof gives him the momentum necessary for attacking the heavier drifts which remain.

wherein appears the little son of Marie and Charles. Here we are reminded of Balzac's earlier remark that this house was the only place where Charles could give himself over to the delights of paternity. One of Marie's manuscript questions, deleted in Pr II A ms, was: "Veux-tu que j'aïlle te chercher notre cher enfant, le petit duc d'Angoulême ... Non." This is but one more example of Balzac's tenacity; an idea may be crowded out at one point, but if there is any opportunity it is put back at another—and usually in elaborated form.

The insertions thus far discussed have been complicated by redistributions of material. Through the rest of Chapter II much of the expansion is accomplished by a simpler process of interpolating additional dialogue and stage directions. When original manuscript speeches are changed, it is frequently because Balzac, having written Chapter I, has a clearer conception of what transpired on the night before. As long as the actual events are clear in his mind, there are relatively few changes as a result of fumbling for words. In the following example, occurring just after Charles has resumed the main course of his narrative, the dialogue is augmented in three consecutive proofs with little disturbance of original speeches. Italics indicate the variants:

MS, Pr II A

—Rue Saint-Honoré, *ma chère*, et mes yeux furent attirés par une vive clarté des combles de la maison où demeure René le parfumeur et le gantier de ma mère, le tien, *le mien*, celui de la cour.

Pr II A ms, D

—Rue Saint-Honoré, *mon minon, dit le roi qui parut s'être remis, et qui, en reprenant ses idées, voulut mettre sa maîtresse au fait de la scène qui allait se passer chez elle. En y passant hier*, mes yeux furent attirés par une vive clarté des combles de la maison où demeure René le parfumeur et le gantier de ma mère, le tien, celui de la cour. *J'ai des doutes violents sur ce qui se fait chez cet homme, et si je suis empoisonné, là s'est préparé le poison.*

Pr II D ms, E [similar to the preceding version except for addition of two speeches, as follows:]

—*Dès demain je le quitte, dit Marie.*

—*Ah! tu l'avais conservé quand je l'avais quitté, s'écria le roi. Ici était ma vie, on y a mis la mort.*

Pr II E ms, C. de P. [First part identical with Pr II A ms, D; ending augmented as follows:]

—Dès demain je le quitte, dit Marie.

—Ah! tu l'avais conservé quand je l'avais quitté, s'écria le roi. Ici était ma vie, reprit-il d'un air sombre, on y a mis la mort....

—Mais, cher enfant, je reviens de Dauphiné, avec notre dauphin, dit-elle en souriant, et René ne m'a rien fourni depuis la mort de la reine de Navarre.... Continues, tu as grimpé sur la maison de René?

—Oui, reprit le roi.

The mere omission of "le mien" from the manuscript version makes the interpolations possible. The added speeches link up with information furnished in Chapter I but do not involve transposition.

The examples thus far analyzed illustrate the chief problems of construction—or reconstruction—encountered in Chapter II. Detailed treatment of many proof corrections occurring in the remainder of the chapter we may leave for the edition proper. It may be well, however, to indicate a few of the more important passages. For example, at a point corresponding to line 1355 of the *Chronique de Paris*, Pr A ms introduces Tavannes as co-investigator (along with Charles and the Gondi brothers) into the mysteries of the Ruggieri laboratory; this harmonizes with Chapter I, where the king's companions have been named. Several times, as Charles's narrative continues, successive modifications in the proofs augment the importance of Tavannes's role and heighten the dramatic qualities of the recital. A favorite device is to interrupt a description with a bit of dialogue, accompanied by stage directions that indicate the effect of the scene upon one or the other of the two observers. In other words, Charles as narrator uses Balzac's own technique for breaking up and lightening long descriptions. The workroom, as pictured by Charles, reminds us somewhat of Gautier's *La Maison de la sorcière*,⁵⁶ as we might expect, details descriptive of the room, the Ruggieri, and the strangely beautiful woman whom Charles judged to be the subject of an experiment—she was "fine et longue comme une couleuvre, blanche comme une souris, livide comme une morte, immobile comme une statue"—are changed in the different proofs. The variants are, however, not nearly so

⁵⁶ This poem, published in 1832, may possibly have influenced Balzac; in its concrete details it is more suggestive than Dumas's *Henri III et sa cour*, where Cosimo Ruggieri plays a part (see n. 61 below).

frequent as in the description of Marie's house at the beginning of the chapter.

Charles is particularly fascinated by the imposing figure of old Lorenzo Ruggieri. "Je le regardais," he says, "si curieusement que son esprit a, je crois, passé en moi." This recalls to our minds the opening of *Facino Cane*, wherein Balzac analyzes his own faculty of observation. At a point corresponding to line 1361 of the *Chronique de Paris*, the name of the younger Ruggieri is mentioned for the first time in Chapter II, and the process of changing "Claude" to "Cosme" begins.⁵⁷ It is curious that Balzac should have confused the name of Claude Ruggieri, who in real life was *artificier du roi* under Charles X, with that of Catherine's astrologer, especially in view of the fact that Cosimo was so well known and is mentioned in so many histories of France. On the other hand, historical information concerning the other members of the family is almost nonexistent. Balzac himself, in a manuscript *ration* in Chapter I, admits that the life of Lorenzo "a échappé à l'histoire," or, at any rate, "a échappé aux investigations purement historiques." The manuscript text of Chapter I also hints that Balzac obtained his information concerning Lorenzo and Ruggieri-le-vieux from certain "auteurs cabalistiques," which the present investigator, much to his regret, has been unable to identify. It may be that Cosimo's brother Lorenzo actually existed; but in that case it seems strange that, as Balzac says, there should be no mention of him in "purely historical" works. In our examination of Chapter I (both variations and sources) we shall see what liberties Balzac had to take with his principal historical source, identified in this study for the first time, in order to eke out such information as he possessed with regard to Lorenzo. It is quite possible that Lorenzo was an invention of Balzac's own and that the vague reference to "auteurs cabalistiques" was thrown in to lend an air of authenticity to spurious documentation.⁵⁸

If only Balzac had given Cosimo his right name from the beginning, the choice of the name "Lorenzo" would be easy to account for. In the manuscript version (Chap. I) we read that "Paul Ruggieri-le-vieux était si con-

⁵⁷ These changes have been brought forward on p. 301 as evidence that Pr II A and Pr III A were set up before Chapter I was written.

⁵⁸ Since this conjecture was first arrived at, my belief that Lorenzo was a fictional character has been further strengthened by the fact that Mr. Furman Bridgers, of Duke University, working upon *An Index of Proper Names in the "Comédie Humaine,"* has unearthed no evidence that Lorenzo was an actual person.

sidéré par les Médicis, qu'ils furent les parrains de ses deux enfants."⁵⁹ With the historical Cosimo as a point of departure and with the Medici put forward as godfathers, Lorenzo would be the logical name for a fictional brother. Unfortunately for such reasoning, Balzac used the name "Laurent" for many pages in the manuscript and first proof of Chapters II and III before discovering that the younger brother should have been called "Cosme" instead of "Claude."

Let us continue in our belief that Lorenzo was a fictional character and see how Balzac makes his association with historical characters plausible. How does it happen, for example, that Cosimo was the only one to suffer for his implication in the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy?⁶⁰ Balzac gets around this difficulty by explaining in the manuscript of Chapter III that Lorenzo had left the kingdom immediately. Pr III D ms and subsequent forms, omitting "aussitôt," merely state that he had left. Balzac cleverly uses the fictional events of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* to account for Charles's historically recorded animosity against Cosimo:

Ce soupçon explique la haine que manifesta le roi contre Cosme lors de la découverte de la conspiration de La Mole et Coconnas; en le trouvant un des artisans de cette entreprise, *il crut avoir été joué par les deux Italiens*, il lui fut

⁵⁹ A curious footnote in Eugène Defrance, *Catherine de Médicis, ses astrologues et ses magiciens-empoisonneurs*, pp. 188-89, takes with complete seriousness Balzac's information concerning the two sons of Ruggieri-le-vieux, paraphrasing this portion of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, though with no mention of Balzac as the source. (In another connection, p. 30, where ultimate sources are lacking, he does cite Balzac as authority.) In Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire infernal*, a whole article, "Universités occultes," consists of an acknowledged quotation from *Le Secret des Ruggieri* (corresponding to ll. 180-286 of the *Chronique de Paris*). Apparently Balzac's desire to be considered a serious historian was granted!

⁶⁰ In Chapter I, at some length, Balzac writes up the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy as an attempt to place Henri de Navarre and Charles IX's younger brother, the Duc d'Alençon, at the head of the Protestants. Charles himself was to be made prisoner. Involved in the plot were the Comte de La Mole, who was a lover of Marguerite de Navarre, and the Comte de Coconnas. Cosimo Ruggieri was implicated because a wax figure which he had made was found, pierced through the heart with two needles, in La Mole's possession. The accusation was made that by this form of magic, called *envoûtement*, the conspirators were attempting to do Charles bodily harm. Any defense claim that the wax effigy was only a love charm and did not represent the king proved futile. La Mole and Coconnas were beheaded in April, 1574, and Cosimo was condemned to the galleys. According to Balzac, Catherine had secretly encouraged the plot but, for reasons of her own, exposed it a few months after the main action of our story. She made possible a light sentence for Cosimo and arranged for his release after Charles's death.

prouvé que l'astrologue de sa mère ne s'occupait pas exclusivement des astres, de la poudre de projection et de l'atome pur. *Laurent avait quitté le royaume* [C. de P., ll. 2078-83; italics mine].

To return to Chapter II, Charles displays special curiosity concerning Lorenzo, the more mysterious of the two brothers. A sentence inserted in Pr II A ms, and maintained thereafter, is significant; Charles says to Marie: "Tête-Dieu pleine de reliques, je trouvais qu'il y avait bien assez d'un Ruggieri dans le royaume, et voilà qu'il s'en trouve deux." Thus a reader already acquainted with the historical Cosimo is led to accept his brother as well. If, as appears likely, Lorenzo is indeed a product of the author's imagination, then Balzac has solved satisfactorily a problem which confronts every writer of historical novels.

Whether Lorenzo was a fictional character or merely a real person about whom Balzac had little information, the following passage will be of interest. In its concentrated mass of corrections it represents several types of variants which are characteristic of the latter part of the chapter but which, in general, are distributed over a wider area. In the MS, Pr II A version presented below, all expressions changed before journal publication are put in italics or boldface; after the first form, only the variations from the preceding version are so designated:

MS, Pr II A

Quoique je fusse placé de manière à ne pas être vu, *Claude s'écria*: —Il y a quelqu'un près de nous! Qui est-ce? demanda-t-il à la morte [i.e., the beautiful woman "livide comme une morte" mentioned above, p. 320].—Le roi! dit-elle. *Nous sommes perdus! entendis-je*. Je me suis montré, Ruggieri m'a ouvert la croisée, et j'ai sauté dans le laboratoire en laissant mes compagnons à leurs affaires.—Oui, le roi, dis-je aux deux Florentins qui se tenaient debout et découverts en grande peur. *Je veux savoir ce que vous faites ici et à l'hôtel de Soissons; vous pouvez avoir des secrets dans lesquels vous ne vouliez mettre personne autre que moi du royaume, voilà pourquoi je suis venu par ce chemin, et je leur montraï la croisée. Il doit se trouver quelque chose au fonds de ceci, leur dis-je en montrant les fourneaux et les livres. Maître Claude et vous, maître Laurent, vous êtes deux savans, vous avez hérité des connaissances de votre père qui, s'il faut en croire madame Catherine ma mère, était un homme adonné à l'astrologie judiciaire et qui a formé le sieur Galilée; vous n'êtes pas des gens ordinaires, vous puisez dans beaucoup de bourses et vous ne devez pas vous jeter en étourneaux dans cette cuisine. Vous avez une idée, je suis homme à l'entendre, ...*

Pr II A ms, D

Quoique je fusse placé de manière à ne pas être vu, *Cosme* s'écria: —Il y a quelqu'un près de nous! Qui est-ce? demanda-t-il à la morte.—Le roi! dit-elle. Je me suis montré, *Ruggieri* m'a ouvert la croisée, et j'ai sauté dans le laboratoire, en laissant mes compagnons à leurs affaires.—Oui, le roi, dis-je aux deux Florentins qui se tenaient debout et découverts en grande peur. *Malgré vos fourneaux et vos livres, vos sorcières et votre science, vous n'avez pas deviné cette visite. Vous êtes le fameux Laurent Ruggieri, dis-je au vieillard de qui parle si mystérieusement la reine ma mère, pour qui vous travaillez peut-être ici. Je veux savoir la vérité tout entière. Or, vous puisez dans tant de bourses que depuis long-temps des gens cupides eussent été rassasiés d'or; vous êtes des gens trop rusés pour vous jeter imprudemment dans des voies criminelles, enfin vous ne devez pas non plus vous jeter en étourneaux dans cette cuisine, vous avez donc une idée, je suis homme à l'entendre ...*

Pr II D ms [Pr II E does not include this portion of chapter]

Quoique je fusse placé de manière à ne pas être vu, *Cosme* s'écria: —Il y a quelqu'un près de nous! Qui est-ce? demanda-t-il à la *jeune* morte.—Le roi! dit-elle. Je me suis montré, *Ruggieri* m'a ouvert la croisée, et j'ai sauté dans *cette cuisine de l'enfer, suivi de Tavannes*.—Oui, le roi, dis-je aux deux Florentins qui *nous parurent saisis de terreur*. Malgré vos fourneaux et vos livres, vos sorcières et votre science, vous n'avez pas deviné *ma* visite. *J'étais bien aise de voir ce fameux Laurent' Ruggieri, de qui parle si mystérieusement la reine ma mère, dis-je au vieillard qui se leva et s'inclina. Vous êtes dans le royaume sans mon agrément, bon homme? Pour qui travaillez-vous ici, vous qui, de père en fils, êtes au cœur de la maison de Médicis? Écoutez-moi bien! Vous puisez dans tant de bourses, que depuis long-temps des gens cupides eussent été rassasiés d'or; vous êtes des gens trop rusés pour vous jeter imprudemment dans des voies criminelles, mais vous ne devez pas non plus vous jeter en étourneaux dans cette cuisine, vous avez donc de secrets desseins, vous qui n'êtes satisfaits ni par l'or, ni par le pouvoir? Qui servez-vous? Dieu ou le Diable. Que fabriquez-vous ici? Je veux la vérité tout entière, je suis homme à l'entendre ...*

Pr II [F], C. de P.

Quoique je fusse placé de manière à ne pas être vu, Cosme
dit en prenant la main de la jeune morte:—Il y a quelqu'un
 près de nous! Qui est-ce? demanda-t-il.—Le roi! dit-elle. Je
 me suis montré *en frappant au vitrail*, Ruggieri m'a ouvert ...
 visite. *Je suis bien aise* ... Écoutez-moi! Vous puisez ... Je
 veux la vérité *toute* entière, je suis homme à l'entendre ...
 [The omitted lines are identical with Pr II D ms.]

Let us limit ourselves here to a general comparison of the manuscript passage with the versions which replace it. The manuscript sentence "Nous sommes perdus! entendis-je" was rather too obvious an admission of guilt on the part of the Ruggieri; since in the *Chronique de Paris* we are to be kept in suspense on this point through the entire story, omission of the sentence is desirable. Self-possession and dignity in the face of royal wrath are later shown to be Lorenzo's outstanding characteristics. Charles's manuscript explanation of why he entered by the window was wordy and lacking in dramatic sense, and his wheedling curiosity concerning the Ruggieri's researches did not accord with kingly character. In the revised versions, on the other hand, the sentence beginning "Malgré vos fourneaux et vos livres, vos sorcières et votre science," is a striking expression of his disbelief in the Ruggieri. The threat implied in "Vous êtes dans le royaume sans mon agrément, bon homme?" is calculated to inspire fear in the alchemists; and when, later on, Charles demands "la vérité toute entière," he does so with an air of authority. Lastly, we may note the diminished importance of Ruggieri *père* in the revised versions, as compared with his manuscript role. Chronology would account, in part, for Balzac's modifications. At the time of our story Catherine de Médicis could not have talked of Ruggieri *père*, or of Lorenzo himself, as having "formé le sieur Galilée," for Galileo was not born until 1564. That Balzac originally had the wrong dates in mind is clear from a *rature* in the manuscript: "Galilée est en prison"; the scientist's imprisonment by the Inquisition took place from 1633 on. Hence the omission, in Pr II A ms, etc., of the reference to Galileo. Balzac also fixes his attention not on the father but on Lorenzo, who becomes an increasingly impressive figure in the revisions of Chapters II and III. It is likely that in building up Lorenzo he made use of a number of details originally associated in his mind with Ruggieri *père*.

Several times in the proof revision of this portion of Chapter II other proper names—"Agrippa," "le vieux Bodin," and "Bernard de Palissy"—

are omitted or juggled under circumstances which lead one to suspect that Balzac did not always have definite authority for attributing particular ideas to particular thinkers but that, instead, he indulged in a general pseudo-philosophical "patter," to which he gave apparent authenticity by introducing well-known names.

At the point where the Ruggieri are brought before Charles and Marie for questioning, marginal directions in Pr II A ms show Balzac's momentary intention of beginning Chapter III, "Fin contre Fin," at once; but he crosses them out and expands his manuscript version of the preparations for the interrogation scene. The few remaining pages of Chapter II include some preliminary verbal skirmishing between Charles and Lorenzo; some description of the room where the inquiry is to be held; and the impression produced on Marie by the sight of the Ruggieri—Lorenzo in particular. The proof corrections are fairly numerous. The most interesting one as a preparation for Chapter III is a remark by Lorenzo inserted in Pr II D ms: "Celui que vous voyez devant vous, Madame, dit alors le grand vieillard, est autant au-dessus des rois que les rois sont au-dessus de leurs sujets, et vous me trouverez courtois, alors que vous connaîtrez ma puissance." The special significance of this insertion for our study of proof corrections is that it motivates the long Pr III A ms insertions at the very beginning of Chapter III (discussed below, p. 327). The fact that it was not inserted until Pr II D ms indicates that Balzac made all, or very nearly all, his corrections for Chapter II before beginning his revisions of Pr III A. It is the last link in the chain of evidence; from the manuscript to the *Chronique de Paris* we know in what order the three chapters were composed and revised. With this final confirmation of the order presented on page 301 we bring to a close our analysis of proof variations in Chapter II.

X

Even leaving out of consideration Chapter I, not composed until after the proofs of Chapter II and III were set up, we begin to perceive how exaggerated was Balzac's boast that he had written *Le Secret des Ruggieri* in a single night. If Chapter II, relatively complete, required so much elaboration in the proofs, the situation is still worse with regard to Chapter III. For the manuscript version of this part of the story is left dangling in the middle of a sentence; and several pages of close handwriting—included in the Chicago proofs—are required to finish it. The original first draft of the story contained no chapter divisions at all; indeed, the manu-

script form of the third chapter would have made a sorry showing if lopped off from its parent-stem, Chapter II. We have already seen how Balzac made one attempt, in Pr II A ms, to begin the new chapter a few pages earlier; we have also studied the important subsequent insertions which laid the groundwork for Chapter III as printed in the *Chronique de Paris*. Using the one set of proofs at Chantilly and the four at Chicago and reconstructing the missing set or sets, Pr III [F], we are now ready to examine the revisions and fresh composition which expanded the manuscript material of Chapter III at least threefold before it was published.

The most fascinating pages of the Chicago proofs, aside from the handwritten ending of the story, are those which begin Chapter III. The heading of the chapter, "III. Fin contre Fin," was inserted in Pr III A ms, together with an opening paragraph, which, revised and augmented in each and every set of proofs, finally occupies lines 1622-50 of the *Chronique de Paris*. The keynote of the paragraph was furnished by the Chapter II insertion (see p. 326, above) in which Lorenzo, with dignity and self-possession, declares that he is "autant au-dessus des rois que les rois sont au-dessus de leurs sujets." The new introduction, then, sets off the astrologer against the king, pointing out that only Cosimo could appreciate the finesse of his brother's challenge. If Lorenzo is clearly supreme in the realm of pure thought, at least Charles IX, as head of his temporal kingdom, has the power of life and death over these two old men suspected of plotting against the sovereign. What will be his verdict? In the clash of wills we have, to repeat a favorite phrase of Balzac's, "toute une scène."

Most of Chapter III is taken up by Lorenzo's demonstration of the *grand œuvre* to which he and Cosimo, as well as generations of researchers before them, have devoted their lives. Fascinated by these glimpses into the mystery of creation, Charles is diverted from his earlier suspicions; if momentarily he returns to them, Lorenzo suavely avoids the issue. But much of the time Balzac seems to be writing only incidentally in the interests of plot; in this portion of the story he is less the historical novelist than the author of *Louis Lambert*, giving rein to his fondness for philosophical speculation.

For the stages in the expansion from the manuscript to the *Chronique de Paris* the reader is, in general, referred to the edition proper; but we may note here that the principal philosophical or pseudo-philosophical ideas are sketched in the manuscript. The first of these is Lorenzo's belief that God does not intervene in the daily affairs of the world. In a

Pr III B ms insertion—which also points out the error of the popular notion that the purpose of alchemy is to discover the composition of gold—he says: “Si j’admettais la présence de Dieu dans la matière à ma voix, la flamme des fourneaux allumés depuis des siècles s’éteindrait demain. Mais nier l’action directe de Dieu, n’est pas nier Dieu; n’accusez pas d’athéisme ceux qui veulent l’immortalité!” This represents a partial shift from the manuscript idea that “Cette croyance [in the nonintervention of God] n’est pas essentielle à nos recherches.” In the manuscript Lorenzo cites as evidence the fact that his brother—named “Cosimo” only in the proofs—believes in the practices of the church⁶¹ while still pursuing the *grand œuvre*. In a Pr III A ms insertion Lorenzo says that Cosimo will die “presque centenaire”—a sign that the Ruggieri expect to escape from their present predicament—and will, at the end of his life, agree with his brother’s opinions. A Pr B ms elaboration gives the reason: “... car il est impossible d’être alchimiste et catholique, d’avoir foi au despotisme de l’homme sur la matière et au règne de l’esprit sur la matière.” The insertion, as a whole, seems to be partly a concession to the plot; the reader is reminded that Lorenzo’s disquisition is intended to save the lives of the astrologers.

Next, in the manuscript version, Lorenzo says that the earth belongs to man; he does not recognize the world of the soul, for after death the substances of man’s body return to their “primitive expressions”—water to water, fire to fire, metal to metal. Successive insertions enlarge upon the idea. According to Pr III B ms, man is a terrestrial creation: “... s’il portait en lui-même une portion de Dieu, il ne périrait pas, et il périt.” Socrates and his school invented the soul, but Lorenzo stands “pour les transformations de la matière que je vois, contre l’impossible éternité d’une âme que je ne vois pas.” The extreme materialism of this conception of creation is modified in a Pr III D ms elaboration:

L’homme n’est pas une création immédiatement sortie des mains de Dieu, mais une conséquence des principes semés [changed to “du principe semé” in the lost set of proofs] dans l’infini de l’éther où se produisent des milliers de

⁶¹ And, consequently, in the importance of God in the life of the individual. Cf. Act I, scene 3, of Dumas’s *Henri III et sa cour*, where Cosimo says to the young aristocrats who seek the aid of his magical powers: “Rassurez-vous, messieurs, je suis aussi bon chrétien que vous.” However, in view of the frequency with which the name “Côme Ruggieri” appears in the play, Balzac was probably not using Dumas directly; otherwise he would hardly have referred to Catherine’s astrologer as “Claude.” There is, of course, no mention of Lorenzo by Dumas.

créatures dont aucune ne se ressemble d'astre à astre, parce que les conditions de la vie y sont différentes. Oui, sire, le mouvement subtil que nous nommons la vie a sa source au-delà des mondes visibles; les créations se le partagent au gré des milieux dans lesquelles elles se trouvent, et les plus infimes d'entre elles y participent en en prenant tant qu'elles en peuvent prendre, à leurs risques et périls. L'alchimie est là tout entière.

Even supposing that something of man survives death, says Lorenzo in a Pr III A ms insertion, it is not the "*moi* actuel." The old alchemist's devotion to the *grand œuvre* is the result of his desire to prolong the "transformation présente," to extend man's life on earth. And he has faith: "Déjà nous avons étendu nos sens, nous voyons dans les astres! ... La vie sera quelque jour à nous!"

Chapter III offers some striking examples of a type of variation that occurs occasionally in other portions of the story—namely, cases in which a compositor's misreading or his confusion regarding marginal directions influences the final form or placing of a passage. The following example, occurring in one of the insertions just discussed, is especially interesting because of Balzac's elaboration of a misreading. In a Pr III B ms insertion the author wrote: "Quoi! les arbres vivent des *centaines d'années*, et les hommes ne vivraient que des années, tandis que *l'homme est actif, là ou l'arbre est passif*" (italics in this and following version indicate variants). In both Pr III C and D the passage remains unchanged, except that the compositor set up "l'autre" for "l'arbre." The misreading was so plausible that Balzac probably did not recognize it as such, but it suggested an antithesis which he elaborates in Pr III D ms to the form maintained through the *Chronique de Paris*: "Quoi! les arbres vivent des *siècles*, et les hommes ne vivraient que des années, tandis que *les uns sont passifs et que les autres sont actifs; que les uns sont immobiles et sans parole, et que les autres se parlent et marchent!*" In view of such elaboration it would be impossible, in a definitive or critical edition, to correct the compositor's error; one can only note the changes and explain the circumstances which caused them to be made.

Soon after this misreading we come upon an instance where the compositor setting up Pr III B misunderstood Balzac's marginal directions concerning a series of transpositions. The original directions were given in Pr III A ms; if they had been carried out to the letter, four passages which together occupy lines 1751-1848 of the *Chronique de Paris* would have occupied the same location, it is true, but in a different order with respect to each other. Their history is too involved to trace here; we

merely note that Balzac accepted the order laid down by the compositor of Pr III B and went on elaborating in the succeeding proofs.

One of the four passages—first in manuscript order, though last in the *Chronique de Paris*—expresses vividly Lorenzo's faith in the continuity of his work, implying that Charles's inquiry is but an unimportant and momentary interruption. It begins with Lorenzo's statement: "Je me suis donc pris corps à corps avec la matière à laquelle je crois, et je la veux pénétrer." As a "patient observateur des atomes," he knocks ceaselessly at the door of creation; and when he dies, his hammer will pass into other hands. The hope of discovering the secret of life was born with the human race; and succeeding generations of researchers have passed on their discoveries. The order of the Templiers was formed for this purpose. Though one of Charles's predecessors, Philippe-le-Bel, burned the men who belonged to that order, their secrets were not destroyed. Lorenzo is the elected sovereign of the new Templiers, a race of intrepid and inseparable seekers after ultimate truth. "Je les dirige tous," says he, "vers l'essence, nous suivons tous la molécule imperceptible qui fuit nos fourneaux, échappe à nos yeux; mais nous nous ferons des yeux plus puissants que les nôtres, nous atteindrons l'atome primitif, l'élément corpusculaire intrépidement cherché par tous les sages qui nous ont précédés dans cette chasse sublime."

The other three passages likewise expound Lorenzo's philosophy, but they are so general in their nature and so loosely constructed that the transitional sentences would have required considerable re-working in whatever order they might be arranged. The prolixity of this part of the chapter is perhaps the chief defect of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* as a historical novel.

Nevertheless, Lorenzo—reflecting Balzac's own enthusiasm for philosophical speculation—does, in some of these very passages, give us a vivid impression of his sincerity; and this impression is reinforced in each successive set of proofs. Our sympathy for him is so strong at this stage that we are regretful, later on, when exigencies of plot cause Balzac to characterize the Ruggieri as conscious charlatans. The following Pr III B ms, D insertion is a case in point:

Malgré son désir de ne pas se laisser surprendre par les ruses florentines, le roi, de même que sa naïve maîtresse, étaient déjà saisis, enveloppés dans les ambages et les replis de cette pompeuse loquacité de charlatan; leurs yeux attestaient l'éblouissement que leur causait la vue de ces richesses mystérieuses étalées, ils apercevaient comme une enfilade de souterrains pleins de gnomes en travail. Les impatiences de la curiosité dissipèrent les défiances du soupçon.

—Mais alors, s'écria le roi, vous êtes de grands politiques qui pouvez nous éclairer.

—Non sire, dit naïvement Laurent.

As we approach the end of the original manuscript version,⁶² the connection of the Ruggieri with political affairs—and the question of their guilt or innocence—comes more sharply into focus. In the manuscript Charles asks a direct question involving René the perfumer and Catherine, and receives in answer a direct defense of the Ruggieri themselves, of René, and of Catherine, which by its very emphasis arouses suspicion. In the final form Charles's questions are more general, and Lorenzo answers with suave generalities of a sort to exonerate Catherine. René is left out of consideration. As for their own guilt, the Ruggieri pretend not to be aware of the king's suspicions. In characterization, then, the revised version is consistent with the picture of Lorenzo which has already been presented—an imposing old man before whose calm dignity even a king felt humble. Three versions⁶³ will be sufficient to show the trend of the revisions:

MS, Pr III B

Avez-vous vendu des poisons à René le parfumeur? ma mère en a-t-elle demandé?

Le roi était haletant.

—Sire, dit Laurent, *jamais ni moi, ni mon frère nous n'avons fait usage ou donné connaissance à autrui de nos découvertes. René le parfumeur ne nous a jamais demandé de poison. La reine Catherine a des bras assez dévoués à son service pour se passer de ces moyens. Mon frère ne l'a pas quittée depuis sa venue en France, et sait combien madame Diane lui a donné de chagrin, elle n'a jamais pensé à la faire empoisonner, cependant Cosme aussi bien que moi connaît de terribles poisons, particuliers aux Ruggieri. Nous ne livrerons jamais à personne ces secrets.*

—*Mais à moi!* dit Charles IX avec un accent de fureur concentrée.

Les deux frères se regardèrent.

—*Vous êtes le maître,* dit Cosme Ruggieri.

⁶² Pr III A ends with the words: "—Sire, dit Marie Touchet, les Ruggieri ont votre parole de gentilhomme." The final page of the incomplete manuscript was not set up before Pr III B; for the text of the ending, see the frontispiece of the present volume, where p. 8 of Pr III B is reproduced, together with Balzac's marginal corrections, which we call "Pr III B ms." In the final manuscript page Balzac substitutes "Cosme" for "Claude" wherever it occurs, by writing one name directly on top of the other. Otherwise the corrections are made in Pr III B ms and subsequent proofs.

⁶³ The first two of these versions transcribe a part of the proof sheet reproduced as our frontispiece.

Pr III B ms, C

Vous occupez-vous à chercher, à combiner des poisons?

—*Pour connaître ce qui fait vivre, il faut bien savoir ce qui tue.*

—*Vous possédez le secret de plusieurs poisons.*

—*Oui, sire.*

—*Ma mère en a-t-elle demandé?*

Le roi était haletant.

—*Sire, dit Laurent, la reine Catherine est trop habile pour employer de semblables moyens. Elle ne partage aucune de mes idées, et sait que le souverain qui se sert de poison périt par le poison, les Borgia offrent un célèbre exemple des dangers que présentent ces ressources. Tout se sait à la cour. Vous pouvez tuer un pauvre diable, et alors à quoi bon? Mais s'attaquer aux gens en vue, y a-t-il une seule chance de secret? Qui tira sur Coligny? ce ne pouvait être que vous, ou la reine, ou les Guise. Personne ne s'y est trompé. Croyez-moi, l'on ne se sert pas deux fois impunément du poison en politique. La reine le sait, elle est de Florence. Mon frère qui ne l'a pas quittée depuis sa venue en France, sait combien madame Diane lui a donné de chagrin, elle n'a jamais pensé à la faire empoisonner. Elle le pouvait. Qu'eut dit le roi votre père? Jamais femme n'a été plus dans son droit, ni plus sûre de l'impunité. Madame de Valentino vit encore.*

Pr III C ms, D

Vous occupez-vous des poisons?

—*Pour connaître ce qui fait vivre, il faut bien savoir ce qui fait mourir.*

—*Vous possédez le secret de plusieurs poisons.*

—*Oui, sire; mais par la théorie et non par la pratique, nous les connaissons sans en user.*

—*Ma mère en a-t-elle demandé? dit le roi qui haletait.*

—*Sire, répondit Laurent, la reine Catherine est trop habile pour employer de semblables moyens. Elle sait que le souverain ... présentent d'aussi misérables ressources Croyez-moi, l'on ne se sert pas deux fois impunément du poison en politique. Les princes ont toujours des successeurs. Quant aux petits, si, comme Luther, ils deviennent des souverains par la puissance des idées, on ne tue pas leurs doctrines en se débarrassant d'eux. La reine est de Florence et sait que le poison est l'arme des vengeances personnelles. Mon frère ... vit encore.*

The defense of St. Barthélemy inserted in the second version reminds us of *Les Deux Rêves*. Catherine, thus capable of open and direct attack when she feels it necessary for the public good, might, as a Florentine,

recognize in poison a legitimate means of obtaining personal vengeance; but even here, under great provocation, she scorns "d'aussi misérables ressources."

What of *envoûtements*? Charles is still apprehensive on this point. The defense—proffered by Cosimo, which is significant in view of the part he is later accused of playing in the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy—is a similar one: Catherine, with every resource at her command, has no need of a practice so innocuous that it resembles the administering of bread pills to a hypochondriac. Except for an unfinished sentence, deleted in the proofs, the manuscript version ends as follows: "La reine Catherine pourrait-elle vous sauver en ce moment? dit le roi d'un air sombre. —Mais nous ne sommes pas en danger, sire, répondit tranquillement Laurent Ruggieri." The ending of the story is neglected until Pr III B ms, when an insertion of a little more than four handwritten pages—expanded and added to in later proofs—brings it to a close. In this insertion Lorenzo claims to see into the future. Not only will he leave Marie's house unharmed, but Cosimo will finally triumph over the king's anger (when the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy is discovered, a few days later). The king is curious to learn of coming events; he is told of the fate of the Valois house, of Henri de Bourbon, and of Marie Touchet. Charles goes to get his son, the little Comte d'Auvergne; during his absence Marie asks why Lorenzo had said that she would be married to Balzac d'Entragues,⁶⁴ have children, and live to be more than eighty years old. Lorenzo replies with dignity that he was required to tell the truth. Pr III C ms elaborates their conversation in such a way that our faith in the Ruggieri is once more undermined. But Charles has forgotten his suspicions; in the same Pr III C ms insertion he receives a note from the physician Chapelain which, as he expects, exonerates the alchemists. While Cosimo looks at the child's hand, the king listens to Lorenzo discoursing on alchemy as "le matérialisme expliqué" (in Pr III B ms, C) or "la mathématique du matérialisme, la loi vivante de ses phases" (in Pr III C ms, etc.). With good humor restored, Charles even comes to feel that Catherine's interest in the Ruggieri is the same as his own:

⁶⁴ Or "Charles de Balzac, marquis d'Entragues, gouverneur d'Orléans," as he is called nearer the end of the chapter. Honoré de Balzac has been taxed with claiming to be descended from the same family as Balzac d'Entragues. Does this partly explain his desire to write up the story of Marie Touchet? For a jibe at these pretensions to aristocracy, see Lovenjoul, *Un Dernier Chapitre de l'histoire des œuvres de H. de Balzac* (Paris: Dentu, 1880), p. 24, where a document relating to Balzac's lawsuit with the *Revue de Paris* is reproduced.

—L'alchimie est donc alors la science des sciences! s'écria Charles IX enthousiasmé. Je veux vous voir à l'œuvre....

—Toutes les fois que vous le voudrez, sire; vous ne serez pas plus impatient que la reine votre mère...

—Ah! voilà donc pourquoi elle vous aime tant, s'écria le roi.

—La maison de Médicis protège secrètement nos recherches depuis près d'un siècle.

Cosimo then predicts a long and happy life for the little Comte d'Auvergne, and the Ruggieri are released. They go down the Rue d'Autruche toward the Louvre without saying a word; but when they are alone, they congratulate each other, in their Florentine speech, on having served their queen so well. They have kept their secret.

The story proper is finished, but Balzac gives us a rapid sketch of subsequent historical events to show how faithfully the predictions of the astrologers were fulfilled. The final paragraph in Pr III B ms, C whets our curiosity with a reference to the Comte de Saint-Germain. In its *Chronique de Paris* form the passage reads:

Laurent et Cosme ont eu pour élève le fameux comte de Saint-Germain, qui fit tant de bruit sous Louis XV. Ce célèbre alchimiste n'avait pas moins de cent trente ans, l'âge que les biographes donnent à Marion Delorme. Le comte pouvait savoir par les Ruggieri les anecdotes sur la Saint-Barthélemy et sur le règne des Valois, dans lesquelles il se plaisait à jouer un rôle en les racontant à la première personne du verbe. Le comte de Saint-Germain est le dernier des alchimistes qui ont le mieux expliqué cette science; mais il n'a rien écrit. La doctrine cabalistique exposée dans cette étude procède de ce mystérieux personnage.

The paragraph is further elaborated in Pr III C ms, D by the following addition, quoted in its *Chronique de Paris* form:

N'est-il pas singulier que trois existences d'hommes, celle du vieillard de qui viennent ces renseignements, celle du comte de Saint-Germain et celle de Cosme Ruggieri suffisent pour embrasser l'histoire européenne depuis François I^{er} jusqu'à Napoléon? Il n'en faut que cinquante semblables pour remonter à la première période connue du monde.—"Que sont cinquante générations, pour étudier les mystères de la vie?" disait le comte de Saint-Germain.

What was the immediate source of the "doctrine cabalistique"? We have been told that the Comte de Saint-Germain wrote nothing. Was the "vieillard" one of the "auteurs cabalistiques" referred to on page 321? Perhaps he was even a compiler (cf. Dreux du Radier) who cited various authors of this type. An oral source is hardly likely here. The clues offered by the life of the Comte de Saint-Germain have proved unfruitful; and I

have reluctantly limited myself to presenting certain historical, rather than cabalistic, sources for *Le Secret des Ruggieri*.

The insertion, as a whole, reminds us that Balzac, nineteenth-century realist, is also the author of *Le Livre mystique* and *La Recherche de l'absolu*. Impelled by curiosity concerning the "mysteries of life," he is willing to study a former century in order to add *Le Secret des Ruggieri* to his series of *Etudes philosophiques*.

XI

The proof corrections of Chapters II and III have familiarized us with important features of Balzacian method. Here, as in other variation studies, we have been conscious of Balzac's eternal struggle with the "écuries d'Augias" of his style, particularly in physical descriptions. We have also remarked his comparative ease in the actual wording of dialogue, the main preoccupation being expansion in successive proofs. We have watched him elaborate stage directions as well, tenaciously refusing to sacrifice material once written if it could be re-used or adapted elsewhere. Even a chance reading due to a compositor's error was occasionally grist to his mill. We have followed the stages in the development of his plot and characters from what might almost be called the "scenario form," the unfinished manuscript of Chapters II and III. We have learned how he mingled historical and fictional (or semifictional) personages, taking advantage of the greater freedom of invention offered the historical novelist when a character is unknown to his readers or is only vaguely familiar. In company with Charles IX we have sought to explore the realm of the occult sciences and have fallen under the spell of the mysterious Lorenzo, who grows in stature as proof follows proof. Through the sometimes incoherent and nebulous demonstration of the astrologer's philosophy we have come a little closer to understanding the importance which Balzac attached to his *Etudes philosophiques* as a division of the *Comédie humaine*.

Even so, we have studied only the last half of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* as it was arranged in the published versions. We have yet to take into account the revisions of the lengthy Chapter I, composed after the manuscript of the other two chapters was set up in proofs, but corrected and expanded before those chapters were revised. It is here that we can begin to evaluate Balzac as a serious student of history. For this was the chapter in which he developed the historical background for his novel, supplementing his general knowledge of the sixteenth century by documentary research. The nature of this documentation we shall inquire into later

(see pp. 349-64, below). For the present, saving for the critical edition most of the individual variants, let us confine our attention to the larger problems of construction and reconstruction. These completely overshadow the redistributions made in Chapters II and III; in the manuscript corrections to the first set of proofs Balzac composes the longest insertion of the whole story and transposes twenty-two pages of proof at one fell swoop, only to break up the transposition later and redistribute it in an effort to see that the documentation is properly assimilated.

In view of the radical rearrangements of manuscript and proof materials it was necessary to devise a special technique for the critical edition in order that the reader might be able to trace the entire progression from the manuscript to the *Chronique de Paris* form. For our present purpose we need not concern ourselves with this apparatus in detail, but it will help keep the general process of revision clear if the reader will allow the longest insertion to be identified as the "Appendix I A" insertion.⁶⁵ Similarly, the twenty-two-page proof transposition which immediately follows this insertion in the Pr I A ms, B form will be called the "Appendix I B" transposition; and the shorter insertion which follows immediately upon these two sections in the Pr I A ms, B form will be referred to as the "Appendix I C" insertion. The comparative length of the three sections will be approximately indicated by giving the number of *Chronique de Paris* lines which each eventually occupies. Only three actual stages of the text have been preserved:

1. The MS, Pr I A form
2. The Pr I A ms, B form (here the second set of proofs has been lost, but except for compositor's errors the readings can be reconstituted from the manuscript corrections to Pr I A)
3. The Pr I [C+], *C. de P.* form (from the number and intricacy of the corrections it is clear that there must have been more than one set of proofs lost between Pr I B and *C. de P.*)

As we have already seen (pp. 299-300, above), the action of our story really commences with an after-supper court scene at the Louvre, but Balzac begins Chapter I *in medias res* with Albert and Charles de Gondi exercising "le métier des chats" on the roof of a house in the Rue Saint-Honoré and then, in explanation of their strange conduct, loops back to the court scene. Lines 1-21 of the *Chronique de Paris* correspond to the original manuscript order.

⁶⁵ See above, p. 304.

In the MS, Pr I A form there was at this point the following very brief summary of the court scene:

Pendant la soirée, le roi Charles avait effrayé sa mère par son attitude sombre et pensive. Elle devinait les pensées qui agitaient ce prince, et quand il ne resta plus que quelques courtisans admis dans l'intimité de la mère et du fils, Catherine quitta le salon, sans que le roi s'en aperçut. Elle le laissa entre les maréchaux de Tavannes et de Retz, M. de Gondi-La Tour et le comte de Solern. Ce dernier était un seigneur allemand que la reine de France, Elisabeth d'Autriche, avait amené en France, et qui y resta par attachement pour elle et pour Charles IX auquel il se dévoua malheureusement trop tard. La dissimulation de ce malheureux prince obligé de cacher ses pensées intimes à tous ses serviteurs, fit qu'il ne se confia que dans les derniers jours de sa vie à cet allemand auquel il avait inspiré la plus profonde compassion.

This passage was omitted in Pr I A ms, B to make way for the very long Appendix I A insertion, followed in turn by the Appendix I B transposition (pp. 14-35 in Balzac's original numbering of Pr I A) and the shorter Appendix I C insertion. The ideas of the omitted MS, Pr I A passage were not thrown out of the story entirely; instead, according to a practice familiar to us from our study of Chapter II, they were reserved for more elaborate treatment—either within the long insertion itself or in proof corrections of ensuing manuscript material.

What was the nature of the Appendix I A insertion? It starts out with a typical Balzacian apology, "Mais pour expliquer comment et pourquoi les deux courtisans étaient là, etc.," and then describes the court scene in great detail. We are made sensible of the strict etiquette which prevailed under Catherine. Employing all the care of a Saint-Simon, Balzac tells us where each of the eminent personages sat or stood and, with a word concerning ancestry or high office, explains the greater or lesser degree of intimacy which each enjoyed in association with royalty. For example, the Comte de Solern, "seigneur allemand," stood in the corner of the fireplace "auprès de la petite-fille de Charles-Quint qu'il avait accompagnée en France." The Comtesse de Fiesque, "une Strozzi, parente de Catherine et dame d'honneur," sat on a stool near Catherine, while "la belle madame de Sauves, une descendante de Jacques Cœur, maîtresse du roi de Navarre, du roi de Pologne et du duc d'Alençon," remained standing ("quoique son mari fût secrétaire-d'état," adds Balzac in Pr I [C+]). The description of the men grouped around Charles hints of factions at court, for besides Tavannes and Villeroy there were:

MM. de Biragues et de Chiverny, l'un l'homme de la reine-mère, l'autre le chancelier d'Anjou et de Pologne, l'homme du frère que Charles IX regardait

comme son ennemi; Strozzi, le cousin de la reine-mère, puis quelques seigneurs parmi lesquels tranchaient le vieux cardinal de Lorraine, et le jeune duc de Guise tous deux également tenus à distance par Catherine et par le roi.

Two sentences added to this passage in Pr I [C+], *C. de P.* are typical of Balzac's re-working of all parts of the Appendix I A insertion. The continuation reads:

Ces deux chefs de la Sainte-Union, plus tard la Ligue, qu'ils avaient fondée depuis quelques années d'accord avec l'Espagne, affichaient la soumission de ces serviteurs qui se savent les maîtres; contenance que Catherine et Charles observaient avec une égale attention. Dans cette cour aussi sombre que la salle où elle se tenait, chacun avait ses raisons pour être ou triste ou songeur.

Notwithstanding the large number of secondary characters thus introduced in Pr I A ms, B to give a more complete picture of the intimate assemblage, Balzac remembers that the reader's main interest must be centered upon Charles IX and Catherine, upon Elizabeth of Austria and Marie Touchet (the latter, of course, was not present except in the thoughts of the others). But he has dealt with these important personages also in the manuscript version of the Appendix I B transposition. His principal task in the Pr I [C+], *C. de P.* stage of revision will be to organize properly these two large sections so that they become fully amalgamated.

It is most essential to acquaint ourselves with the makeup of the Appendix I B material in order to understand how it could be broken up and redistributed for the *Chronique de Paris* form. It will be necessary to distinguish between transpositions of large blocks of material and transpositions of individual sentences or parts of sentences. The latter are so numerous and are so thoroughly re-worked in the moving process that only in the critical edition proper, with its carefully planned system of cross-references, could their history be adequately treated. But if we gain sufficient perspective, we can see that the long transposition is logically divided into seven blocks, whose history, in the large, we can trace here. Although transposed, as a whole, from their manuscript location, the seven blocks still keep in Pr I A ms, B the same order with respect to each other. The unifying principle is that they analyze Catherine's character, of which the "thème prédominant" is her passion for power; this analysis involves a discussion of the means by which she maintained her supremacy, which, in turn, necessitates an explanation of her relationships with people like Charles IX, Marie Touchet, and Cosimo Ruggieri. The following table showing the subject matter of the different blocks will be found convenient for reference:

- Block I Catherine's passion for power
- Block II Her belief in policy "diviser pour régner"
- Block III Degeneration of Charles IX as result of latter policy
- Block IV Catherine's attitude toward Marie Touchet
- Block V Her participation in La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy through Cosimo Ruggieri, her astrologer
- Block VI Her belief in astrology
- Block VII "Combat sourd" between Catherine and Charles, caused by latter's suspicions of mother

Some of these blocks are longer than others; their relative lengths will be indicated below.

Having made this preliminary survey of the Appendix I B transposition, let us return to the Appendix I A insertion and discover what Balzac did with it in the lost proofs, Pr I [C+], so that it might be set up in the *Chronique de Paris* form. For some time (ll. 22-89 of the *Chronique de Paris*) the journal version follows the same order as the first part of the long insertion. This ends with a brief portrait of the young queen, Elizabeth of Austria, seated with Catherine at the left of the fireplace, trying vainly to hide her sorrow at having been abandoned by Charles IX upon Marie's return from the Château de Fayet. What could be more natural than for the *Chronique de Paris* to transfer here (ll. 89-153) Block IV of Appendix I B, in which is explained Catherine's attitude toward Marie and her infant son? Only a few lines of introduction need be inserted in the *Chronique de Paris* to shift the spotlight: "Ce n'était pas la seule déception que la reine éprouvait en cette affaire. Jusqu'alors Catherine de Médicis lui avait paru son amie; et c'était sa belle-mère qui, par politique, avait favorisé cette trahison, en aimant mieux servir la maîtresse que la femme du roi. Voici pourquoi." From sympathizing with Elizabeth's disappointment we turn to appraising Catherine's self-interested policy. Marie's dossier follows as a matter of course. She really loves Charles IX, we are told in Block IV; she comes from a modest family, and she has no desire to follow in the footsteps of royal mistresses like the Duchesse d'Étampes and Diane de Poitiers. In short, she will never be a rival for political power, and Catherine can safely encourage Charles IX in his infatuation for her. This brings us back to the subject of Catherine's relations with Charles, whose mood of forced gaiety during supper has attracted the queen-mother's attention and aroused her fears that he might be planning some act of violence against her. Thus, for a short space (ll. 154-65) the *Chronique de Paris* returns to Appendix I A material, down through the following sentence, maintained in the *Chronique de*

Paris without change from its Pr I A ms, B form: "Par la force de ses combinaisons, Catherine était au-dessus de toutes les circonstances; mais elle ne pouvait rien contre une violence."

The sentence suggests to Balzac that this is the proper location for five of the seven blocks listed above. He rearranges them in the *Chronique de Paris* so that Block I occupies lines 166-79; Block VI, lines 180-286; Block II, lines 287-333; Block V, lines 333-59; and Block VII, lines 359-414. A point especially to be noted in this rearrangement is the fact that Block VI, dealing with Catherine's belief in astrology, no longer follows the account of her participation in the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy through Cosimo Ruggieri; instead, it succeeds Block I, treating of Catherine's passion for power. To make the shift in order and to fuse together two blocks originally several hundred lines apart, the end of Block I is ingeniously re-worded and expanded in the *Chronique de Paris* so that the new order seems as natural as the old. So illuminating is this particular example that both versions are reproduced here:

Pr I A ms, B

Exclusivement ambitieuse, Catherine de Médicis n'eut d'autre passion que celle du pouvoir. Sans ce thème *prédominant de sa vie*, elle restera toujours incomprise.

Pr I [C+], C. de P.

Deux mots expliquent cette femme si curieuse à étudier, et dont l'influence laissa de si fortes impressions en France. Ces deux mots sont Domination et Astrologie. Exclusivement ambitieuse, Catherine de Médicis n'eut d'autre passion que celle du pouvoir. Superstitieuse et fataliste comme le furent tant d'hommes supérieurs, elle n'eut de croyances sincères que dans les sciences occultes. Sans ce double thème, elle restera toujours incomprise. En donnant le pas à sa foi dans l'astrologie judiciaire, la lucur va tomber sur les deux personnages philosophiques de cette Etude.

Other transitions, simpler to write or re-write, likewise succeed in fitting the various blocks into their *Chronique de Paris* order.

Faulty organization of the manuscript and Pr I A ms, B forms is the principal reason why such rearrangement and re-working of the blocks was desirable. The subject of Block VII is the struggle between Catherine and Charles now that the latter has taken a new resolution to act for himself. Upon examining the details of the preceding blocks (Pr I A ms, B form) we find the logical progression of ideas marred by scattered sentences which anticipate Block VII instead of sticking to the immediate subject. In the process of reorganization which takes place for the *Chro-*

nique de Paris, Balzac takes out these unity-destroying sentences and moves them in modified form to Block VII. Occasionally a sentence occurring in an earlier block almost duplicates a sentence already part of Block VII, so that one of them must give way to the other. It is amazing (or would be if we did not know Chapter II) that in the welter of transpositions Balzac should have had to sacrifice so little of what he had already written and that the final result should hang together as well as it does.

After having absorbed five blocks, the *Chronique de Paris* version (II. 414-67) again returns to Appendix I A material. The transition causes little trouble. A two-line insertion (and one of these lines an adaptation, transposed) is sufficient: "En de pareilles circonstances, et dans un moment où le fils et la mère faisaient assaut de fourberie, le roi surtout devait occuper les regards." The technique is already familiar. The spotlight is now on Charles; in its merciless glare we perceive the many evidences of his physical and moral degeneration.⁶⁶ But was not that also the subject of Block III of the Appendix I B transposition? As if by foreordination, this one remaining block is moved to occupy lines 468-83 of the *Chronique de Paris*. The block is short, but it has had a most interesting history, beginning with its source in an eighteenth-century historical compilation (see pp. 359-60, below). The stylistic changes between the manuscript and Pr I A ms, B were rather numerous; they are even more so between the second form and the *Chronique de Paris*. In the journal form an inserted introduction shows that the author himself is appalled by what the spotlight reveals. Let us examine more closely than usually the last two versions:

Pr I A ms, B

Ce roi si vigoureux *devint* débile, cet esprit si fortement trempé se *trouva* plein de doutes *et* sans appui, *sans* **confiance en lui**; ce caractère ferme *était sans force*, la valeur guerrière *devint* férocité, la discrétion *devenait* dissimulation, l'amour fin et délicat des Valois *devenait* une inextinguible rage de *plaisirs*. Ce grand *roi* méconnu, perversi, *s'usait par* les mille faces de sa belle ame; roi sans pouvoir, ayant un noble cœur et n'ayant pas un ami; tiraillé par mille desseins contraires, il avait *fini par apercevoir la haine* que lui *portait* sa mère, *et la lui rendit avec usure*; mais la lumière *venait quand la lanterne était brisée*.

⁶⁶ See below, pp. 357-61, for a comparison of part of this text with Balzac's principal historical source.

Pr I [C+], *C. de P.*

*La reine-mère en voyant son ouvrage devait avoir des remords, si toutefois la politique ne les étouffe pas tous au moment où les gens couverts de pourpre atteignent à leur but. Si Catherine avait su l'effet de ses intrigues sur son fils, peut-être aurait-elle reculé! Quel affreux spectacle! Ce roi si vigoureux était devenu débile, cet esprit si fortement trempé se trouvait plein de doutes, cet homme, en qui résidait l'autorité, se sentait sans appui; ce caractère ferme avait peu de **confiance en lui-même**; la valeur guerrière s'était changée par degrés en férocité, la discrétion en dissimulation, l'amour fin et délicat des Valois en une inextinguible rage de plaisir. Ce grand homme méconnu, perverti, usé sur les mille faces de sa belle âme, roi sans pouvoir, ayant un noble cœur et n'ayant pas un ami, tiraillé par mille desseins contraires, offrait la triste image d'un homme de vingt-quatre ans désabusé de tout, se défiant de tout, décidé à tout jouer, même sa vie. Depuis peu de temps, il avait compris sa mission, son pouvoir, ses ressources, et les obstacles que sa mère apportait à la pacification du royaume; mais la lumière arrivait dans une lanterne brisée.*

Prominent among the stylistic variations are the verb changes. Where Pr I A ms, B had replaced the imperfects of the manuscript by past definitives, the Pr I [C+], *C. de P.* form makes frequent use of the pluperfect; Catherine's influence had already had its effect. Where Pr I B purposely employed *devenir* several times, the *Chronique de Paris* seeks variety in verbs. A noun change is significant; twice *homme* is used in the *Chronique de Paris*, putting the emphasis on Charles as a man rather than as a king. And, indeed, the elaborations in the later version do give us more respect for the man Charles had been. The reasons given, toward the end of the passage, for Charles's change of heart toward his mother rise above the merely personal feeling expressed in Pr I A ms, B; he hates Catherine now because she is an obstacle to peace within the kingdom. We begin to think that Charles, had the lantern not already been broken, might actually have been a ruler, not a puppet king. The whole tragedy of his reign is there.

We are nearing the end of the Appendix I A insertion. With the interpolation of Block III accomplished, we realize that none of the Appendix I B transposition remains to be absorbed. Our long insertion, in developing a scene only briefly sketched in the manuscript passage which it displaced, has diverted the course of Chapter I into another channel. The current is full and strong, so that Balzac in Pr I [C+] has been able to drop into it seven blocks of transposed material without appreciably retarding the flow.

Only the final section of the long insertion must now be adapted to occupy lines 484-511 of the *Chronique de Paris*. It begins with a mention of the king's physicians, Paré and Chapelain, who were anxiously observing their master. As usual with Balzac, a bit of conversation with Chiverny and Tavannes lightens the end of the very long exposition whose complex history we have been studying.

Because the long transposition has been completely disposed of, Balzac must now pass directly from the material of Appendix I A to that of Appendix I C. The fusion of the two insertions is accomplished with less difficulty than one might expect:

LAST SENTENCE OF APPENDIX I A

Charles IX *revint à son fauteuil accompagné de son ancien favori, avec lequel il parut s'entretenir du siège de la Rochelle.*

FIRST SENTENCE OF APPENDIX I C

Le roi craignit de rendre sa froideur trop visible, il se leva, vint causer avec les deux reines en appelant auprès d'elles son médecin.

Pr I [C+], C. de P.

Charles IX *se promena, le bras appuyé sur l'épaule de son ancien favori, avec lequel il parut s'entretenir de ses souffrances pour tromper les curieux; puis craignant de rendre sa froideur trop visible, il vint causer avec les deux reines en appelant Birague auprès d'elles.*

Thus, within a single transitional sentence—requiring not elaboration but merely modification of details already present—the *Chronique de Paris* joins two sentences, and two sections of material, which in Pr I A ms, B were widely separated in space though not in time of composition. Appendix I C is short, and the *Chronique de Paris* (in ll. 512-35) quickly brings the court scene to an end. We have learned in the course of the first insertion that the reconnoitering of the Saint-Honoré quarter is planned; and, at the very end of the second insertion, Catherine, about to leave the room, whispers to Charles words which are prophetic of the closing scene of Chapter I: "Monsieur, j'ai des choses importantes à vous confier."

For the rest of the chapter the three versions follow the same order, due allowance being made for leaving out pages 14-35 of Pr I A, whose history as a transposition we know. We shall therefore dispense with further analysis of subject matter, except for a significant Pr I [C+], C. de P. insertion which occurs toward the end of the final interview between Catherine and Charles. It extends from "Vous vous reprochez" in line 956 of the *Chronique de Paris* through "domine les empires?" in line 1005; for the text, very little changed in intervening publications, see the

Conard edition, XXX, 299-300. If Balzac wrote *Sur Catherine de Médicis* to defend Catherine for seeking absolute power, no passage of his long study succeeds better than the present insertion. With true political genius she outlines a gigantic scheme for uniting France and Spain and Italy under one house, the Valois, and with one religion, Catholicism. If Austria aids the Protestants, she must be put down, notwithstanding the feeling of Elizabeth for her native land. Friends of the Protestant cause, says Catherine, take pleasure in promoting discord between Charles and his mother. But is it her fault that his only son is illegitimate? If Elizabeth had borne him three sons, instead of a daughter, would there have been a La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy? Catherine's face becomes beautiful in its animation; she fixes upon Charles "le coup d'œil fascinateur de l'oiseau de proie sur sa victime." The king, we are told, "ne vit plus la mère d'un seul homme, mais bien ... la mère des armées et des empires (*mater castrorum*)."

But Charles has observed the special precautions taken by his mother to arrange their meeting; "sa défiance ne pouvait tomber devant des phrases." Catherine is astonished to find how deep-seated are the suspicions in the heart of her son.

Once the insertion is finished, we recall that Charles is not the instrument by means of which Catherine's dreams will be realized. They both agree that the moment has come to act, but for the young king it is too late. No longer the purposeful leader, persuasive and statesmanlike, he becomes once more the melancholy weakling of the earlier court scene; and though he prays heaven for guidance in questioning the Ruggieri, his real desire is for death to release him from the contradictions of life.

The insertion, as a whole, is a magnificent illustration of Balzac's ability to tell a story. Just when we are deciding that the chapter contains too much documentation, and recalling Henry James's phrase about "huge feet fairly ploughing the sand of our desert," we are lifted up in spite of ourselves to a lookout from which the pattern of the story may be clearly perceived. We have sympathized with Charles and Marie and Elizabeth; we have followed the intrigues which menace their happiness; but perhaps, after all, Catherine is the really tragic figure. At any rate, the scene is one that will remain long in the memory.

It may seem surprising, in view of the importance of the insertion with respect to Balzac's general scheme, that the whole scene between Catherine and Charles was, in a sense, an afterthought in *Le Secret des Ruggieri*. But such is the case. The evidence appears in a manuscript *rature* (at a point corresponding to line 897 of the *Chronique de Paris*), where, in the

body of the page, we find the chapter heading "Marie Touchet" and the notations "fx titre" and "II" to prove that Balzac intended to begin at once our present Chapter II. However, he does not hesitate for long; blotting out the headings, he writes the words "Aux premières lueurs de l'aube" and launches forth into the last part of the chapter. After some preliminaries that have nothing to do with Marie Touchet, comes the scene in Charles's atelier.

The close of the chapter, therefore, amounts to an insertion in the manuscript. To the reader familiar with *Sur Catherine de Médicis* as a whole, it is almost inconceivable that the final scene should so narrowly have escaped exclusion from *Le Secret des Ruggieri*. It seems, and is, central in the author's general intention. Its presence in the *Chronique de Paris* version indicates that Balzac already had his fundamental thesis in mind in 1836; the inserted passage harmonizes with the "Introduction" composed some six years later. Nor does it merely harmonize; the thought which is expounded so lumberingly and pedantically in the "Introduction" is here made incandescent in a flame brighter and hotter than that of Charles's forge.

XII

As compared with the extensive re-workings in proof sheets, the variants in printed editions are infrequent and relatively unimportant. The example quoted on page 311 is exceptional. Many of the variations in the volume publications (recorded in right-hand-page notes in our critical edition) concern typographical inconsistencies in paragraphing, sentence division, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and the like. Occasionally one of these may be interesting—for instance, the progression from "lacqs" to "lacs" to "lac" in line 1042 of the *Chronique de Paris*—but usually they are recorded because without them a critical edition would be incomplete. Most of the true variants are stylistic and involve single words or short expressions. If we possessed only the printed editions, we might learn something of Balzac's method from analyzing these stylistic variants; but the proof corrections are much more revealing and consequently have been written up more fully. The stylistic variants interest us most when they continue a process of correction already begun in the proofs; accordingly, cross-references to the earlier stages are included in the notes. The most frequent variations are found in the Souverain edition; very few are initiated in the Werdet, which was published very shortly after the *Chronique de Paris*.

A few of the variations in published editions do, however, deserve spe-

cial attention here. These are changes in *Le Secret des Ruggieri* that could not have occurred in the proofs, since they grow out of the writing of *Les Lecamus* (1841) and its expansion, under the title of *Le Martyr calviniste*, to form Part I of *Catherine de Médicis expliquée* (Souverain, 1842). Take, for example, one which occurs in the passage whose earlier history as a proof insertion we have indicated on pages 313 and 316. In the *Chronique de Paris* and the Werdet form we read:

—A l'exception de Charlemagne, dit-il d'une voix sourde et creuse, tous les rois de France du nom de Charles ont fini misérablement.

—Bah! dit-elle, et Charles VIII?

—A la fleur de l'âge, reprit le roi, ce pauvre prince s'est cogné la tête à une porte basse, au château d'Amboise qu'il embellissait, et il mourut en d'horribles souffrances; *on lui a percé le crâne avec un effroyable instrument que Paré s'occupe à perfectionner, et que je croyais sentir dans ma tête, à mesure qu'il me décrivait l'opération. Cette horrible torture a donné la couronne à notre maison.* [Italics indicate variants discussed below.]

Replacing "Cette horrible torture" by "Sa mort," Souverain, Furne, and Conard omit all the preceding reference to the operation of trepanning because it has been expanded most dramatically, in a different setting, in *Les Lecamus* and *Le Martyr calviniste*. The occasion is the deathbed scene of François II, and only incidentally is reference made to a similar operation on Charles VIII. For nearly forty pages in the Souverain edition of *Le Martyr calviniste* Ambroise Paré and his instrument are a matter of almost breathless interest to the reader. Skilfully developing the idea of the three simple lines dropped from *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, Balzac even manages, at one point or another, to adapt their wording.

Another special type of variation occurs in the passage whose history as an Appendix II B proof insertion we have discussed on pages 315-16 and 317-20. Here the Souverain, Furne, and Conard editions several times replace the words "protestantisme" and "protestant" by "Calvinisme" and "Calviniste," respectively. The latter appellations were prevalent at the time of our story, as we see in the note which Balzac wrote for the end of Volume I of *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*. There he apologizes for having used the terms incorrectly in *Le Martyr calviniste* in connection with events which preceded the "Tumulte d'Amboise":

Comme on le verra dans le volume suivant, ce ne fut que postérieurement au tumulte d'Amboise que la Réformation s'appela le Calvinisme, et l'auteur, faisant ce récit dans l'époque actuelle, s'est servi des mots Calvinisme et Calviniste plusieurs fois dans ce volume. En s'apercevant de sa faute, il a cru pouvoir ar-

river à tems pour la réparer; mais son ouvrage s'imprimait en province, et il a trouvé les feuilles tirées.

A l'époque où se passe le drame du MARTYR CALVINISTE, le parti de Calvin n'avait pas de nom fixe, on le nommait la *nouvelle doctrine*, la *Religion*, la *Réformation*, le *Prêche*, et ses adhérens étaient des Huguenots, nom dont l'origine a donné lieu à des controverses et qui, dit-on, vient de la porte Hugon à Tours, où s'assemblèrent les premiers Réformés, car ce nom est d'abord écrit Hugonneaux et prononcé Huguenaux, puis Huguenots. On les appelait encore Religioneux, Réformés ou Ceux de la Religion. Enfin, en 1562, les mots Calvinisme et Calviniste prévalurent [*Sou.*, I, 340-41; italics Balzac's].

When writing this note, Balzac may well have been acquainted with a chapter from Estienne Pasquier's *Les Recherches de la France* entitled "Du Mot Huguenot" (livre VIII, chap. lv, cols. 857 ff.), where the essential facts are given.

A Chapter I omission in *Souverain* and subsequent editions is of special interest because it summarizes the plot of *Les Lecamus* or *Le Martyr calviniste* in such a way as to throw some light upon Balzac's original conception of that story. The passage later omitted reads as follows in *Chronique de Paris* and Werdet:

Mais les Guise se défièrent tellement de leur alliée [Catherine], qu'ils la firent espionner par la jeune reine Marie Stuart, leur nièce, femme de François II. Comment le roman et le drame ne se sont-ils pas encore emparés de l'aventure de ce marchand pelletier, nommé Lecamus, qui, sous prétexte de faire voir des fourrures à la reine-mère, lui apportait à examiner un traité avec les calvinistes. Surprise par sa belle-fille, qui s'était défiée du pelletier, Catherine livra les papiers aux Guise, qui mirent le marchand à la question. L'émissaire sacrifié garda le silence le plus profond à la reine-mère. Quels hommes étaient les bourgeois de ce temps!

We may note that in the earlier proofs Catherine was to sign, not merely examine, the treaty; also, at no stage of the *Secret des Ruggieri* passage was it evident that Christophe, "le fils du pelletier," was involved rather than his father. Thus it would appear that in 1836 Balzac did not yet have the outlines of his story clearly in mind. We have remarked (p. 286, n. 21) upon Lovenjoul's evidence that a considerable part of *Les Lecamus*—first planned for publication by Werdet as *Un Martyr*—was written by the summer of 1837, and upon his conjecture that Balzac may have worked on the story as early as 1835 or 1836. The passage we have been considering would seem to indicate that Balzac did not prepare the Werdet manuscript of *Un Martyr* until after he had published the *Chro-*

nique de Paris form of *Le Secret*. Why did he not omit the summary from the Werdet edition of *Le Secret*, or at least change it so as to make the furrier's son the hero? This may be accounted for by the fact that, though our story did not appear until August of 1837, Chapter I was printed in 1836 by Baudouin—months before the other chapters were printed by Bêthune et Plon.

Bourgeois⁶⁷ cites a passage from De Thou's *Histoire universelle*, livre XXV, as a possible source for the theme of *Le Martyr calviniste*. We may consider as another possibility a passage from Garnier's continuation of Velly, *Histoire de France depuis l'établissement de la monarchie jusqu'au règne de Louis XIV.*⁶⁸ Garnier's account is based upon La Planche and La Place as well as upon De Thou. Like the passage quoted above from the earlier versions of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, De Thou and Garnier furnish in condensed form the central situation of *Le Martyr calviniste*. Both sources are definite in their references to the furrier's son as the agent who carried the treaty to Catherine. In certain details—e.g., the names "le Camus" and "Chandieu" rather than "Camus" and "Chandey"—Garnier's version seems slightly closer to Balzac than does De Thou's, but neither can be considered an exclusive source. Many actual personages not mentioned by them play a part in the novel, and the author must draw upon various other historical and semihistorical works for additional material. It is interesting that Balzac should have transformed, or deformed, the name "Chandieu" into "Chaudieu." The fictional element bulks much larger in this novel than in *Le Secret des Ruggieri*. In inventing the romance of Christophe and Babette Lallier, Balzac copies, to a certain extent, Scott's technique of focusing the plot interest upon fictional characters; but, as suggested by the reviewer quoted on page 289, the love story in *Le Martyr calviniste* is so slight that it is overshadowed by the real events of Catherine's reign. The offense, if such it be, is mitigated by the novel's inclusion in the larger study of which Catherine is, by design, the central figure.

We pass over several other examples of variations due to the grouping.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

⁶⁸ 15 vols.; Paris: Desaint et Saillant, 1770-86. The passage occurs on pp. 464-65 of Vol. IV (1781), which was part of Garnier's continuation and was published by Desaint and Nyon l'ainé. Both De Thou (in French translation) and Velly appear in Balzac's lists of readings for *Sur Catherine de Médicis*; see below, pp. 349-51. Working independently of these lists, Mr. Furman Bridgers, of Duke University, came across the passage from Velly referred to here and was kind enough to permit its use in this study without previous announcement of the discovery.

In one case Balzac makes an insertion for the Souverain edition of *Le Martyr calviniste* in which the facts should harmonize with *Le Secret des Ruggieri* but do not completely succeed in doing so. This is exceptional; usually, by means of insertions, omissions, or substitutions in the one story or the other, or in both, Balzac brings them closer together and places his material where it most logically belongs in the novel as a whole. Thus, he injects into the revision of printed editions the same zeal for re-distributing and harmonizing his materials which was so notable a feature of the corrections in proofs.

XIII

We come, last of all, to the most engrossing problem of the present study, one that hitherto has only been broached—namely, an investigation of Balzac's documentation, the probable reading which he did in order to get the historical background for *Le Secret des Ruggieri*.

At the Musée Lovenjoul in Chantilly there is a collection of Balzac jottings which Lovenjoul has bound together under the title "Recueil de fragments manuscrits" (cote A 158). A section of this volume concerns possible readings for *Catherine de Médicis*; there we find, in six or more pages, a long list of titles: sets of memoirs, general histories of France, biographies, controversial pamphlets, etc. Or rather we find, in addition to miscellaneous bibliographical notes, three lists, drawn up at different times, in which a number of titles are repeated. Usually the titles are abridged, and frequently they are inexact. Sometimes the place and date of publication are given, sometimes not; and sometimes they vary from one list to another. The lists are truly formidable. For example, a line in the first one reads: "... tomes 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. des Vies des hommes illustres de France—1747 in 12." For a while this work eluded identification, but finally a clue was furnished by information in Quérard, *La France littéraire*, with regard to an item on the second list, "Vie de Gaspard M. Coligny par l'abbé Pérau 1747 in-12." The latter work proved to be Volume XIV of a twenty-six-volume series, dated 1739-68, entitled *Les Vies des hommes illustres de la France, depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à présent, par M. d'Auigny*. Volume XIV itself is anonymous, but it bears the desired date, 1747; and Quérard tells us that Pérau wrote it. Balzac thus gave to his whole series the date 1747, which properly belongs only to Volumes XIV and XV. Had it not been that Pérau's biography of Coligny was one of the volumes in the series, the latter might have failed of identification. This is but one illustration of the difficulties encountered in checking Balzac's informal bibliography

—eliminating inaccuracies and filling in where the information was incomplete.

Although time was lacking in which to examine in detail all the volumes on Balzac's lists, even when they could be definitely identified, thousands of pages have been read, and many more have been skimmed, in a search for sources. To give full bibliographical data concerning the works consulted would occupy too much space with problems of identification comparable to the one just discussed. However, we may note that on Balzac's lists appeared the histories of France by Velly, Mézeray, and De Thou; the memoirs of Condé, Castelnau (including the "additions" of Le Laboureur), La Noue, the Duc de Nevers, Brantôme, Marguerite de Navarre, and others; and works dealing with the French civil wars, such as Davila's *Historia delle guerre civili di Francia* (in French translation) and various anonymous "remonstrances" or "commentaries" on the conditions obtaining under Henry II, Francis II, or Charles IX.

With works so numerous, so broad in scope, and in many cases covering the same field, mere correspondence of certain facts with those given by Balzac was, of course, not considered sufficient to establish one of them as a definite source. The objective was unmistakable evidence that our author knew, read, and *used* a particular work—evidence that he must have got his facts directly from that work and not from some other book containing similar information.

We have already mentioned the possible influence on *Le Secret des Ruggieri* of several authors whose names appear on these lists: Estienne Pasquier, De Thou, and Velly (in Garnier's continuation). Another such work, Belleforest's *Histoire des neuf Charles*,⁶⁹ together with a chapter from Pasquier entitled "De la Fatalité qui se trouve quelquefois és noms,"⁷⁰ may well have influenced the insertion in which Balzac compared Charles's lot with that of other kings who had borne his name (see above, pp. 314 and 317). Pasquier begins his chapter with the remark that, although the subject may seem "plus digne de risée que d'observation," he does not wish to pass over it in silence "parce que l'on trouve quelques exemples en nostre France qui concernent telle matiere." After citing

⁶⁹ The full title is *L'Histoire des neuf roys Charles de France: contenant la fortune, vertu, & heur fatal des roys, qui sous ce nom de Charles ont mis à fin des choses merueilleuses. (Le tout comprins en dix-neuf liures, avec la table sur chacune histoire de roy. Par François de Belle-Forest Comingeois. A Paris. A l'Oliuier de P. L'Huillier, rue S. Jacques. 1568.)*

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, livre IV, chap. xxv; tome I, cols. 419 ff.

the names of Brutus, Augustus, and Constantine from ancient history, he arrives at the example which concerns us:

Tout de la mesme façon en est-il souvent advenu aux nostres. Car tout ainsi que sous Charles Martel sa lignée prit premier accroissement de grandeur, & que sous un Charles le Grand son petit fils, elle vint en toute extremité, aussi sous Charles le Simple commença-elle à perdre sa force, & sous un Charles que Hugues Capet frustra du Royaume qui luy appartenoit, elle perdit toute autorité.

This accords very well with the spirit of Balzac's insertion, in which Charles IX says, "A l'exception de Charlemagne tous les rois de France du nom de Charles ont fini misérablement," and gives facts to support his statement.

The very title of Belleforest's book, with its emphasis on the nine Charleses and their "heur fatal," suggests that it would be a natural source for Balzac to use for these supporting details. Except for Charles VIII, who died, says Belleforest, of a stroke of apoplexy while "aduisant iouer les gentils-hommes de sa maison à la paume," the facts as given in *L'Histoire des neuf Charles* agree pretty closely with those in Balzac's insertion.⁷¹ It seems very probable that both Pasquier and Belleforest influenced our author when he composed it.

Such influences, however, were rather general in nature, and at best the various works already discussed are but secondary sources; they account for a very small proportion of the historical information utilized in *Le Secret des Ruggieri*.

In contrast with these, one title included in two of Balzac's lists does meet all the tests necessary to prove that the novelist used it directly; and it accounts so largely for the documentation of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, both in spirit and in matter, that I feel justified in considering it the principal historical source of the story.⁷² That work, as has already been indicated, was written by an eighteenth-century historian or compiler by the name of Dreux du Radier. Its full title is *Mémoires historiques, critiques, et anecdotes des reines et régentes de France*. It was first published, anonymously, in four duodecimo volumes in Amsterdam in 1764. Expanded to six octavo volumes, it was published in Amsterdam in 1776. The larger edition was reprinted in Paris in 1808 by the Frères Mame; this time the

⁷¹ A more complete comparison is made in the critical edition proper, p. 236.

⁷² It also accounts for a significant proportion of the documentation in the "Introduction" but for very little of *Le Martyr calviniste*. For reasons inherent in the fantastic nature of the story, *Les Deux Rêves* is considered to be outside the field of serious historical documentation.

author's name appeared on the title-page. In all probability the Paris edition of 1808 was the one used by Balzac,⁷³ and we cite from it.

The volumes are not divided into numbered chapters but consist of many sections or "articles"—in the French sense—each with its own heading. The sections which Balzac used most frequently were: (1) "Catherine de Médicis, femme de Henri II," (2) "Marie Touchet, maîtresse de Charles IX," and (3) "Marguerite de Valois, femme de Henri IV." Of these, the most important article, as might be anticipated, is the one on Catherine herself; pages and pages of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, as well as of the long "Introduction," owe their inspiration directly to this. While Balzac unquestionably absorbed the entire article, as well as the two others mentioned, he did not stop there. When occasion demanded, he took facts from articles on Diane de Poitiers, on Anne de Pisseleu, on Elisabeth d'Autriche, on one of Henri III's mistresses called "N... Flamin" (a French version of the Scotch name Fleming), and even on Marie de Médicis. We suspect Dreux du Radier of having been a *livre de chevet*, so familiar was Balzac with widely separated portions of the work.

Let us examine our author's borrowings. The first example, below, concerns an event of Catherine's girlhood. It is quoted from Balzac's "Introduction" for three reasons: (1) because it follows Dreux du Radier very closely, establishing him as an unmistakable source; (2) because it shows that for his adaptation Balzac did not need more information than Dreux du Radier provided; and (3) because a proof correction in Chapter I of *Le Secret* refers again to the anecdote. The material from both authors is arranged in parallel columns in order that the resemblances in wording, as shown by italics, may be more evident:

DREUX DU RADIER

Le Milanais avoit été rendu à François Sforce, et la maison papale rétablie dans Florence après un violent orage élevé contre cette maison. La révolte contre les Médicis avoit été poussée si loin, que les Florentins ne s'étoient pas contentés d'enfermer Catherine de Médicis, qui n'avoit que neuf ans, dans un monastère, après l'avoir dépouillée de tous les biens de sa

BALZAC

Ce fut pendant le siège de Florence, entrepris par les Médicis, pour y rentrer, que le parti républicain, non content d'avoir enfermé Catherine, âgée de neuf ans, dans un couvent, après l'avoir dépouillée de tous ses biens, voulut l'exposer entre deux créneaux au feu de l'artillerie, sur la proposition d'un nommé Baptiste

⁷³ Since he almost certainly used the expanded version, which was printed only once in France; and we know that Mame-Delaunay were among the early publishers of his novels.

maison; pendant le siège de Florence, un des séditieux, nommé Baptiste Cei, alla jusqu'à proposer de mettre la jeune princesse sur les murs de la ville entre deux créneaux, pour l'y exposer au feu de l'artillerie. Bernard Castiglione avoit opiné d'une manière encore plus cruelle contre Catherine; et, dans le conseil, son avis avoit été, "que, bien loin de la remettre au pape, qui la redemandoit, il falloit la rendre la victime de la débauche et de la brutalité du soldat." Il n'y eut que l'horreur qu'inspirent naturellement de pareilles propositions, même aux plus emportés, qui sauva la princesse [*op. cit.*, IV, 212-13].

Cei. Bernard Castiglione alla plus loin dans un conseil tenu pour aviser à terminer les affaires, il fut d'avis que, loin de remettre Catherine au pape qui la redemandoit, il falloit la livrer aux soldats pour la déshonorer. On voit que toutes les révolutions populaires se ressemblent. La politique de Catherine qui favorisait tant le pouvoir royal, pouvait avoir été conseillée par de telles scènes, qu'une Italienne de neuf ans ne pouvait pas ignorer [Sur Catherine de Médicis, éd. Co-nard, XXX, 19-20; wording identical with Souverain, 1842].

How familiar all this seems to one who has been working with Balzac's variations! Almost with a start of surprise we remind ourselves that the name at the top of the first column is Dreux du Radier; it might so easily be Balzac, with the second column representing merely the author's later version of his own material. For here is the same technique of revision which we know so well: changes in word order; transposition of ideas; substitution of nouns, verbs, etc. But, nevertheless, whole phrases remain absolutely unchanged. The only important respect in which the "revised" version does not follow Balzac's usual practice is its condensation of the "original" form. This is compensated for by an ensuing characteristic elaboration: whereas Dreux du Radier was merely relating an anecdote, drawing no conclusions from it, Balzac sees in this childhood experience an influence that helped shape Catherine's later political credo, molding her into so fanatical an exponent of royal absolutism.

The example cited illustrates very well the dangers attending a search for sources. Before discovering Dreux du Radier, the present investigator copied from the *Discours merveilleux*⁷⁴ a passage concerning Catherine which might easily have been considered one of Balzac's sources:

Les vns proposerent de la mettre dedans vn panier, & le pendre dessus le rempart entre deux creneaux: à fin que quelque cannonade l'emportast: mesmes

⁷⁴ Full title of edition cited: *Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et déportements de la reine Catherine de Médicis* (attributed to Henri Estienne; Cologne: P. du Marteau, 1663). The work was first published as early as 1575. The excerpt quoted occurs on pp. 11-12.

y eut quelque prescheur, qui exhorta les Seigneurs publiquement, à ce qu'il s'en deffissent de telle sorte. Autres de la mettre en vn bordeau, quand elle seroit en aage, aucuns de l'oster aux religieuses qui l'auoyent en garde, & la mettre au conuent des Emmurees, dont elles ne sortent iamais: tous d'un accord, de ne la rendre iamais à son oncle.

Certain phrases in this passage show some kinship with Balzac's wording, but the resemblances are slight, as compared with the almost word-for-word correspondence between Balzac's text and that of Dreux du Radier; and the phrases concerned appear in all three authors. The facts in the *Discours merveilleux* are insufficient to account for either of the other two versions, whereas in the latter the facts are duplicated. Dreux du Radier cites the *Discours merveilleux* as authority for other portions of his article on Catherine but not for this one. The probability is that, although he was acquainted with the passage, he depended upon other, more definite sources for the details of his anecdote. For us the significant point is that Balzac did not need to go back of Dreux du Radier for the factual details but found all the material ready to his hand in the *Mémoires et anecdotes des reines et régentes de France*.

As stated above, the anecdote so fully narrated in the 1842 "Introduction" was briefly referred to in a proof correction of *Le Secret*, Chapter I, written six years before—one of the many evidences that Balzac knew and used Dreux du Radier while writing the earlier work. The circumstances leading up to this revision are enlightening as regards both the frequency of borrowings and our author's method of adapting them to his own purposes. Together with other closely related manuscript passages and proof corrections, this particular example has some bearing on the question of whether Lorenzo Ruggieri was or was not a fictional character. Both Dreux du Radier and Balzac treat in some detail predictions by various astrologers like Bazile, Nostradamus, etc.; the importance of these in *Le Secret* is that they make our story of the Ruggieri family more plausible. Except for Cosimo's connection with the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy, Balzac has little information about the Ruggieri—and probably none about Lorenzo—but, as a story-teller, he must keep them as much as possible in the center of the picture. How does he do so? He builds up the Ruggieri by attributing to them accomplishments which history, as represented by Dreux du Radier, etc., credits to other astrologers. In the manuscript, for example, he says that Ruggieri-le-vieux alone "fit le thème de nativité de Catherine, en sa qualité de mathématicien, d'astrologue et de médecin de la maison de Médicis." But from a Dreux du

Radier passage (IV, 261) we learn that it was "le fameux mathématicien Bazile" who drew up a "thème natal" for Catherine. In Pr I A ms, B, Balzac compromises with Dreux du Radier by saying that Ruggieri-le-vieux "dressa, de concert avec le fameux mathématicien Bazile, le thème de nativité de Catherine." Dreux du Radier also tells of a famous consultation at Chaumont in which a magician allowed Catherine to see in a magic mirror a spinning-wheel at which François II, Charles IX, and Henri III—still children—were placed one after the other; by the number of turns each made she could tell how many years each child would reign. Henri IV, placed next at the wheel, made twenty-two turns, thus arousing, says Du Radier (and Balzac as well), the undying hatred of Catherine. Balzac, reporting the consultation, says that it confirmed the *thème* which Bazile and Ruggieri-le-vieux had drawn up. What is the significance of using the scene as a confirmation of the earlier prophecy? Simply, that by this ingenious device Balzac justifies himself for reading into the Bazile-Ruggieri *thème* a good many details which Dreux du Radier's report on Bazile had not mentioned. Among the elaborations is the following: "Les malheurs par lesquels elle [Catherine] commence sa vie" (manuscript form) is changed in Pr I A ms, B to "Les malheurs qui pendant le siège de Florence signalèrent le commencement de sa vie." The insertion of the phrase "pendant le siège de Florence" shows clearly that Balzac is referring to the anecdote with which we began our study of Dreux du Radier. In thus elaborating upon the originally meager prophecy of Bazile, Balzac also compensates for his even more meager knowledge of Ruggieri *père*. If, as the adaptation indicates, he knew so little about Ruggieri-le-vieux, it is probable, as already suggested, that he knew still less about Lorenzo and even invented him out of whole cloth.

Balzac made extensive use of Dreux du Radier, not merely in the 1842 "Introduction," but also at every stage of the first chapter of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*. The examples which we shall examine here are cited now from the manuscript, now from Pr I A ms, B, and now from Pr I [C+], *C. de P.* Occasionally the complete story of a particular borrowing requires us to take into account all three forms, with their progressive elaborations. The most numerous borrowings occur in the first long insertion of Chapter I or in the proof elaborations of the long passage first transposed *en bloc* and then broken up and redistributed. It was, in fact, the accumulation of documentary material in these portions of the story which necessitated the complete rearrangement of Chapter I. Balzac may have been acquainted with Dreux du Radier before writing his first draft of Chapters

II and III, but he probably did not study the work intensively until he began the composition of Chapter I itself. Otherwise he would hardly have applied the name "Claude" to Catherine's astrologer; the change to "Cosme" appears for the first time, as we have seen, in the manuscript of Chapter I. The influence of Dreux du Radier upon Chapters II and III shows up mainly in proof corrections or insertions which harmonize with material already used in the first chapter.

How faithfully does Balzac, in *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, follow the wording of his source? Sometimes, as in the example concerning Elizabeth of Austria (pp. 362-63, below), a fairly long passage is close enough to the original source to justify quoting both forms in parallel columns. More frequently, however, Balzac borrows specific facts or ideas and uses them wherever it best suits his needs. Consequently, a single page of Dreux du Radier may contain several bits of information which are exploited at widely separated points in *Le Secret*; or the reverse may be true, Balzac collecting facts from various pages of the *Mémoires et anecdotes* and using them in illustration of a single idea.

Again, we find in Dreux du Radier certain general ideas which Balzac develops in his own fashion; though the parallels in expression are less striking, such borrowings are among the most important in the novel. In the anecdote of Catherine's childhood we have noted that Balzac draws conclusions bearing upon the thesis which he defends in his "Introduction." The next example is chosen partly because the idea of it is central for the plausibility of *Le Secret des Ruggieri* and partly because of the social generalizations it suggests to the author. Without a wide belief in astrology in sixteenth-century France we should have no story. Du Radier says of Catherine:

Sa faiblesse pour l'astrologie judiciaire, les devins et son caractère superstitieux, sont bien mieux prouvés que sa religion. Jamais on ne vit tant de *nécromans*, de *sorcières* et de *magiciens*, qu'il en eut sous son règne, où la France en fut inondée [*ibid.*, IV, 261; italics Du Radier's].

In a footnote of the article "Agnès Sorel, maîtresse de Charles VII" we read:

La manie des *astrologues* a été long-temps celle de la cour de France. Cette science y étoit en honneur dès le temps de Louis le Débonnaire, qui y avoit beaucoup de foi. Celui des auteurs qui a le mieux réussi à écrire l'histoire des règnes de Pepin, de Charlemagne et de Louis son fils, prend le titre d'*astronome*. Tout sage que fut Charles V, on voit un astrologue à ses gages; ils y brillèrent sous Charles VII, et Louis XI eut un maître d'*astrologie* dans sa jeunesse. Il est même

à croire qu'il y avoit sous ces règnes un *astrologue en titre*. Catherine de Médicis en réveilla le goût, et les règnes de Henri II, et de ses trois fils, François II, Charles IX, et Henri III furent infectés d'astrologues et de magiciens [*ibid.*, III, 185; italics Du Radier's].

Balzac, after presenting several instances of Catherine's superstitious belief in "l'astrologie judiciaire," generalizes concerning the period: "A cette époque, les sciences occultes se cultivaient ouvertement avec une ardeur qui peut surprendre les esprits incrédules de notre siècle si souverainement analyseur" (manuscript and Pr I A ms, B forms). And then he goes on with a characteristic comparison of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, saying that perhaps in the sixteenth-century occult sciences one finds the germ of nineteenth-century positive science, with one advantage in favor of the earlier period: "... les audacieux chercheurs du seizième siècle, au lieu de faire de l'industrie, faisaient de l'art, de la pensée, de la poésie" (manuscript form). Thus, for all he has steeped himself in the atmosphere of the sixteenth century, he remains himself—a nineteenth-century realist, observing contemporary society and preserving the record for later generations who might also wish to compare the present with the past. Noteworthy in our study of proof corrections is the fact that here, in these generalizations, a sudden crop of stylistic variations should spring up. For pages Balzac has been preoccupied with adding facts, many of them borrowed, and the stylistic variations have been less numerous; but the conclusions are peculiarly his own, and he becomes more self-conscious with regard to style.

Space forbids discussing here more than a few further examples of Balzac's adaptation of his source. The following passage, taken from the first long insertion of Chapter I, is selected for four reasons: (1) the ideas contained therein are significant as regards the theme of our story; (2) it concentrates into brief space rather extensive borrowings from Dreux du Radier; (3) occasionally the wording is close enough to the source to indicate that Balzac must have had the *Mémoires et anecdotes des reines et régentes de France* open before him as he composed and corrected; and (4) the passage illustrates Balzac's fondness for extracting factual details from footnotes and running them smoothly into his text. In its Pr I A ms, B form the passage reads:

En ce moment Charles IX âgé d'environ vingt-quatre ans, paraissait en avoir quarante, il était déjà la proie de la maladie dont il mourut et qui fit croire à des personnes d'une haute autorité qu'il fut empoisonné. *Selon de Thou*, le

Tacite des Valois,⁷⁵ *les chirurgiens trouvèrent dans le corps de Charles IX des tâches suspectes (ex causâ incognitâ reperti livores)*. Néanmoins il peut être permis aujourd'hui de croire que Charles IX mourut d'une maladie de poitrine. Mais les excès de Charles IX, son genre de vie, le développement subit de ses facultés, ses derniers efforts pour ressaisir les rênes du pouvoir, son désir de vivre, l'abus de ses forces, ses dernières souffrances et ses derniers plaisirs, tout démontre aux esprits impartiaux qu'il mourut d'une maladie de poitrine, affection peu connue alors, mal observée et dont les symptômes purent autoriser Charles IX lui-même à se croire empoisonné. Ce prince qui par les funestes conseils des Gondi, et des courtisans placés à dessein par Catherine autour de lui, gaspilla ses forces intellectuelles autant que ses forces physiques, et dont la maladie dut être tout occasionnelle et non constitutive, fit preuve de si belles qualités, il dut être un si grand roi que sa mère le prit en haine, tant elle craignit de perdre le pouvoir qu'elle avait conquis. Les sentiments de Catherine éclatèrent surtout *aux funérailles de ce fils qui furent encore plus négligées que celles de François II, au drapeau mortuaire duquel on attachait un écriteau où se lisaient: Tanneguy du Chastel, où es-tu? Mais il était Français. De Saint-Lazare à Saint-Denis, Charles IX fut conduit par quelques archers de la garde et par Brantôme. Tanneguy du Chastel avait dépensé trente mille écus du temps, somme énorme, pour la pompe funèbre de Charles VII, le bienfaiteur de sa maison.* [Ordinary italics indicate passages where the wording follows Dreux du Radier closely; boldface italics indicate expressions italicized by Balzac as they were in the source.]

Let us now see how Dreux du Radier regarded the possibility that Catherine de Médicis may have had her son poisoned. The footnotes (indicated by asterisks) are Du Radier's:

Si le roi ne fût pas mort, Catherine eût survécu au pouvoir souverain qu'elle avoit usurpé. On renouvela contre elle l'accusation de poison, et elle n'est pas mieux fondée. Sans lui prêter un crime, dit très judicieusement un moderne, on peut croire que le chagrin et les remords furent le seul poison qui abrégéa sa vie ... Enfin, Henri Estienne n'accuse point encore Catherine de la mort de Charles IX.* Ce prince, à sa mort, l'avoit déclarée régente jusqu'au retour de son successeur. Elle donna tous ses soins à s'assurer de sa nouvelle régence; et *les funérailles de Charles IX furent aussi négligées que celles de François II*. Catherine, qui avoit fait une dépense toute royale aux obsèques du père, ne pensa presque pas à celles des enfants.** Elle fit confirmer sa régence au parle-

⁷⁵ We have observed on p. 290 how Bourgeois praises Balzac for drawing upon De Thou and saluting in him the "Tacitus of the Valois." But we shall shortly realize that in the very passage under consideration Balzac was actually using Dreux du Radier without acknowledgment. As for our author's tribute to De Thou, we find a somewhat similar one in the "Avertissement" of the *Mémoires et anecdotes* (I, 18), where the historian is referred to as "l'inestimable de Thou, notre Tite-Live."

ment le 3 juin [*op. cit.*, IV, 244-46; ordinary italics designate the passages which correspond closely with Balzac; boldface italics indicate expressions italicized by Du Radier].

* Il faut pourtant convenir que M. de Thou penche pour le poison, qu'il en accuse même indirectement la reine, et qu'il dit qu'à l'ouverture de son corps on trouva des taches ***ex causâ incognitâ reperti livores***. Thuan. lib. 57, vers la fin. Mais voy. le procès-verbal d'ouverture de son corps, du dernier mai 1574, dans Papire-Masson, Éloge, tome 2, p. 553.

** Il n'y eut dans toute la cour que La Brosse et Sausac, et des prélats, que Guillard, évêque de Senlis, aveugle pour lors, qui suivirent le corps de François II à *Saint-Denis*. On attachâ au drap mortuaire qui couvroit le corps un écriteau où étoient ces mots: ***Tannegui du Chastel, où es-tu? Mais il étoit Français***. En semblable occasion *Tannegui du Chastel* (vicomte de la Bellière, grand-écuyer de France, mort au siège de Bouchain le 29 mai 1477, et neveu de Tannegui, favori de Charles VII, mort avant son maître, en 1449) avoit employé trente mille écus de ses deniers pour faire la pompe funèbre de Charles VII, bienfaiteur de sa maison. Voyez de Thou, sous l'an 1560, liv. 18. Ce grand homme paroît confondre Tannegui du Chastel, dont il s'agit ici, avec Tannegui du Chastel son oncle, prévôt de Paris, mort douze ans avant Charles VII. Tous les princes et les seigneurs quittèrent le convoi de Charles IX à l'église de *Saint-Lazarre*, et il n'y resta que *Brantôme*, quatre gentilshommes de la chambre, et quelques archers de la garde. La Popélinière parle autrement.

Comparison of Balzac and Du Radier discloses a more scientific analysis of Charles's malady on the part of the former, but both agree that poison was not the agent which caused the young king's death. As a definite proof that Balzac used the text just quoted, the footnotes are significant. His attention was attracted to the Latin phrase from De Thou, with which he might "épater le bourgeois," and to the phrasing of the sign fastened on the bier of François II. The two footnotes treat different subjects; choosing and rejecting according to his needs, Balzac adapts them both within a single paragraph. He modifies the wording and shifts the order of facts slightly, but not enough to disguise their origin. So closely does he follow the text of his source that he inadvertently employs a plural verb *se lisaient* (cf. Du Radier, *ou étoient ces mots*) when a singular was required; in a subsequent set of proofs he corrects the error. We can hardly doubt that he was reading the page from Du Radier as he wrote.

In the same Balzac passage it is suggested that, while Catherine did not actually poison Charles, she used more subtle means of accomplishing his ruin; namely, the choice of counselors devoted to her interests rather than his. Such is the belief of Dreux du Radier also:

Un reproche ineffaçable qu'on fera toujours à Catherine, c'est l'éducation qu'elle donna à ses enfants, à l'infortuné Charles IX, ce génie si beau, si élevé; ce

prince né pour être l'un de nos plus grands rois, s'il eût été conduit par une autre mère. Elle sut faire des vices de toutes les semences de vertu qui étoient en lui, et de toutes ses grandes qualités autant de grands défauts. Elle changea sa prudence et sa discrétion en une noire politique, sa vivacité en fureur, son courage en férocité: il n'y eut que sa tempérance pour le sexe qu'elle ne put changer entièrement. Brantôme, qui ne doit pas être suspect, après les éloges dont il comble Catherine de Médicis, dit que "ce fut le maréchal de Retz qui le pervertit du tout, et lui fit oublier et laisser toute la belle nourriture que lui avoit donnée le brave Cipière." Le maréchal de Retz, Florentin, étoit une créature de Catherine: ce fut elle qui le mit auprès du roi, qui éleva sa fortune [*op. cit.*, IV, 242-43].

The *Chronique de Paris* text of one Balzac sentence already quoted (toward the end of the Pr I A ms, B passage on p. 358, above) is re-worked in such a way that the Dreux du Radier influence is more evident. The sentence reads as follows in the *Chronique de Paris*: "MM. de Cypierre [later changed to "Cypierre"] le gouverneur, et Amyot le précepteur de Charles IX avaient fait de leur élève un si grand homme, ils avaient préparé un si beau règne, que la mère prit son fils en haine, tant elle craignit de perdre le pouvoir qu'elle avait conquis." Besides being re-worked, this sentence was moved to another location for the *Chronique de Paris*. One result of the general rearrangement of Chapter I is that borrowings from Dreux du Radier, formerly consecutive, became scattered by the time they were published in the journal form.

In still other passages Balzac follows Dreux du Radier in placing the responsibility for Charles's degeneration squarely on Catherine. Two sentences⁷⁶ of the source concern us particularly: "Elle sut ... changer entièrement." Balzac utilizes the idea of the first sentence in elaborating the Chapter II dialogue between Marie Touchet and Charles IX. There, in a Pr II A ms, D insertion, Marie is made to say:

—Les femmes dont l'âme est grande et dont les intentions sont pures se servent des vertus pour dominer les hommes qu'elles aiment, et les femmes qui ne leur veulent pas de bien, les gouvernent en prenant des points d'appui dans leurs mauvais penchants. Or, la reine a fait des vices de plusieurs belles qualités, et vous a fait croire que vos mauvais côtés étaient des vertus. Était-ce là le rôle d'une mère?

The novelist's adaptation of the second sentence undergoes considerable stylistic revision in later versions, but the manuscript form will be enough to show its general nature:

⁷⁶ The second and third sentences in the Du Radier passage last quoted.

Après avoir donné au roi une sombre et secrète jalousie contre son frère, elle se servit de cette passion pour miner sa forte constitution par les entraves qu'elle lui suscitait; ses efforts rencontraient des barrières impénétrables. Ce roi si vigoureux était débile, cet esprit si fortement trempé était plein de doutes, ce caractère ferme était sans trône, la valeur inactive devenait férocité, la discrétion devenait dissimulation, l'amour fin et délicat des Valois devenait une rage inextinguible.

The influence of Du Radier's second sentence upon this passage is unmistakable; specific resemblances in wording show, beyond doubt, the connection between the two. But Balzac is here no slavish imitator. Using Dreux du Radier as a starting-point, he develops some of the possibilities suggested by that writer's spirited contrasting of the old Charles with the new. Quality by quality, Du Radier has compared the Charles of good natural endowments—fostered by his preceptor Cypierre—with the Charles preyed upon by the intrigues of the ambitious queen-mother. Balzac does likewise, now taking up the same qualities as his predecessor, now adding others to the list. With one exception the spirit of the two passages is the same; the exception concerns the young king's moderation in love. Whereas Dreux du Radier says that Catherine could not change entirely Charles's "tempérance pour le sexe," Balzac believes that she was successful, so that (to use the Pr I A ms, B expression) "l'amour fin et délicat des Valois devenait une inextinguible rage de plaisirs." This is consistent with the other passages in Balzac where the author is inclined to agree with those who think Charles's death was hastened by his excessive love for Marie Touchet.

In the next example Balzac makes a specific reference to Brantôme as if he had used the sixteenth-century source directly. Notwithstanding the impression of erudition thus produced, he still is depending upon the eighteenth-century compiler—and drawing upon Brantôme *through him*. The passage in question has the further interest of being an insertion in Pr I [C+], C. *de P*. It is one of several evidences that our author not only knew Dreux du Radier before he began the manuscript of Chapter I but also had the work open before him while correcting each new set of proofs. The inserted passage concerns Elizabeth of Austria at the time when Catherine was openly encouraging Charles's affair with Marie Touchet. Italics indicate exact, or nearly exact, duplications in the two forms; boldface italics indicate expressions italicized by Balzac in passages adapted from Du Radier; and boldface roman indicates an expression italicized by Du Radier but not occurring in Balzac's adaptation.

DREUX DU RADIER (V, 26 ff.)

J'entends parler de *Brantôme*: c'est ainsi qu'il s'exprime (*Dames Galantes*, t. 2, p. 62.) "Nous avons eu notre reine de France, donna Isabel d'Autriche, laquelle nous pouvons dire par-tout *avoir été une des meilleures, des plus douces, des plus sages et des plus vertueuses reines* qui régna depuis le règne de tous les rois et reines *qui aient jamais régné*. Je le peux dire et un chacun avec moi, qui la [*sic*] vue ou ouï parler, sans faire tort aux autres, et avec une très grande vérité." Après cet éloge, il parle de la beauté d'Élisabeth, pour rendre ce qu'il avoit à dire de sa piété d'autant plus admirable; et tel est le *portrait qu'il fait de cette princesse*. "Elle étoit une très belle princesse, *ayant le teint de son visage aussi beau et délicat que dame de sa cour, et fort agréable. Elle avoit la taille fort belle, encore qu'elle l'eût moyenne assez*." Passant ensuite aux qualités de l'esprit et du cœur: "Elle étoit très sage, dit-il, et aussi très vertueuse, très bonne; *et qui ne fit jamais mal ni déplaisir à personne* quelleconque; non pas offenser la moindre du monde ..."

[Then follows more than a page concerning Elizabeth's piety and modesty, ending:]

"... pour lire et prier Dieu dans *ses heures*.... Telles formes de prières ne tenoient rien de celles des hypocrites, qui, voulant paroître entièrement devant tout le monde, font leurs prières et dévotions publiquement et en marmottant, afin qu'on les trouve plus dévotes et saintes."

(V, 19 ff.)

Après la mort du roi, pénétrée d'une tristesse profonde, elle n'éclata point en regrets; on ne l'entendit point se plaindre du ciel ni de son sort ... *Quelques unes de ses dames lui disant*: "Au moins, madame, *si Dieu*, au lieu d'une fille, vous eût laissé un fils, vous seriez reine mère; votre sort seroit moins à plaindre." "Ahl louons Dieu, *répondit-elle, de ne m'avoir pas donné de fils*. La France est déjà assez à plaindre, sans avoir encore un enfant pour roi, et retomber dans les

Pr I [C+], C. de P.

Les raisons qui faisaient agir en cette affaire Catherine de Médicis échappaient donc aux yeux de *dona Isabelle qui*, selon *Brantôme*, *étoit une des plus douces reines qui aient jamais régné, et qui ne fit mal ni déplaisir à personne, lisant même ses Heures en secret*. Mais cette candide princesse commençait à entrevoir les précipices ouverts autour du trône, horrible science qui pouvait bien lui causer quelque vertige; elle dut en éprouver un grand pour avoir pu *répondre à une de ses dames qui lui disoit, à la mort du roi, que si elle avoit eu un fils, elle serait reine-mère et régente*:—"Ahl louons Dieu de ne m'avoir pas donné de fils. Que fût-il arrivé? Le pauvre enfant eût été dépouillé comme on a voulu faire au roi mon mari, et j'en aurais été la cause. Dieu a eu pitié de l'état, et il a tout fait pour le mieux."

Cette princesse, dont *Brantôme* croit avoir fait le *portrait* en disant qu'elle *avait le teint de son visage aussi beau et délicat que les dames de sa cour, et fort agréable; qu'elle avait la taille fort belle, encore qu'elle l'eût moyenne assez, comptait pour fort peu de chose à la cour*; mais l'état du roi lui permettant de se livrer à sa

malheurs d'une nouvelle minorité. *Que fût-il arrivé? Victime des passions des grands, le pauvre enfant eût été dépouillé comme on a voulu faire au roi mon mari, et j'en aurois été la cause. Dieu a eu pitié de l'État; il a tout fait pour le mieux; remercions-le de ses bontés.*" Élisabeth ne pouvoit donner de marques plus certaines de sa sagesse et de son attachement pour la France. Elle résolut pourtant de la quitter.

(V, 18)

Entièrement occupée des exercices de *piété*, et du soin de plaire au roi, Élisabeth *n'eut que très peu de part à tout ce qui se passa* en France sous le règne tumultueux de Charles IX.

double douleur, son attitude ajoutait à la couleur sombre du tableau, qu'une jeune reine, moins cruellement atteinte, aurait pu égayer. La *pieuse* Élisabeth prouvait en ce moment que les qualités qui sont le lustre des femmes d'une condition ordinaire, peuvent être fatales à une souveraine; car une princesse, occupée à tout autre chose qu'à *lire ses Heures pendant la nuit*, aurait été d'un utile secours à Charles IX, qui ne trouva d'appui ni chez sa femme, ni chez sa maîtresse.

Comparison with Brantôme⁷⁷ shows that Dreux du Radier quotes his text pretty faithfully, orthographical changes and certain slight condensations aside. The explanatory transitions for the first three quotations divide up what was continuous text in Brantôme. These transitions are Dreux du Radier's own; it is therefore especially significant that Balzac should have adapted one of them: "... tel est le portrait qu'il fait de cette princesse." Although referring to Brantôme by name, he has taken *all* of his material from the text quoted in the left-hand column above. Condensing the direct quotations to a much greater extent than did Dreux du Radier, he uses nothing from Brantôme that is not also in the intermediary source. The un-italicized portions of the text in the right-hand column integrate the quotations with the court scene which forms so important a part of Chapter I.

All this does not mean that Balzac was unacquainted with writers like Brantôme and Le Laboureur.⁷⁸ He doubtless knew them in a general way, and the names are on his lists to show that he had them in mind as storehouses of sixteenth-century information. But as a working tool he found

⁷⁷ *Œuvres complètes de Brantôme*, éd. Lalanne, IX, 594-95. The section in which Lalanne gives a fuller text than Du Radier does is the part concerning the evils which would befall the kingdom if Elizabeth had a son. For our present purpose we need not go back to the edition which Du Radier used, since Balzac condenses even more.

⁷⁸ Le Laboureur is cited by name in connection with the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy.

Dreux du Radier, compact with citations from early writers, more convenient to use. And, like a college Freshman who has not been trained to scrupulous bibliographical honesty, he drew a herring across the trail by referring to the original, rather than the intermediate, source.

Specific references of the sort are less numerous in *Le Secret* than in the "Introduction." More frequently, in passages of our story where Balzac is borrowing from his familiar source, he takes refuge in vague, general references like "Les mémoires du temps rapportent un autre fait non moins étrange" or "L'histoire a enregistré les instances que fit Catherine pour engager Henri II à ne pas descendre en lice." Such expressions soon become recognizable as so many signboards pointing to Dreux du Radier, or possibly, on rare occasions, to some other historian of his type.

Does Balzac ever publicly acknowledge his indebtedness to the eighteenth-century compiler? Only once—in the "Introduction"—and without giving his name. On a page strewn with borrowings from the *Mémoires et anecdotes* we read:

Diane, qui avait pour gendres les ducs d'Aumale et de Bouillon, alors prince souverain, conserva toute sa fortune et mourut en paix en 1566, âgée de soixante-six ans. Elle avait donc dix-neuf ans de plus que Henri II. Ces dates, tirées de son épitaphe copiée sur son tombeau *par l'historien qui s'est occupé d'elle vers la fin du dernier siècle*, éclaircissent bien des difficultés historiques; car beaucoup d'historiens, etc. [*Con.*, XXX, 44; italics indicate the veiled reference to Dreux du Radier].

But how grudging is the acknowledgment! For we know that Dreux du Radier furnished not only the information about Diane⁷⁹ but much besides. With "beaucoup d'historiens" Balzac hastily retreats from even so slight an admission of his pillaging; he pretends, as usual, that he himself is an "abyss of knowledge."

In judging the relative importance of the historical sources for *Le Secret*, Dreux du Radier must be accorded first rank. The very number and bulk of the borrowings, and their intimate bearing on the central theme of our story, lead inevitably to this conclusion. In parallel passages we find repeated testimony to Catherine's overweening ambition: her share in the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy; her corruption and weakening of Charles; and her setting of one party against another, one religion

⁷⁹ "Elle y mourut, suivant son épitaphe dont j'ai fait tirer la copie sur son tombeau, le 22 avril 1566, âgée de soixante six ans, trois mois et vingt-sept jours. Comme cette pièce rectifie une infinité d'erreurs dans nos historiens, que Bayle même n'en a pas eu une note régulière, je crois qu'on trouvera ici cette copie exacte avec plaisir; elle m'a servi de guide pour les faits chronologiques de ce mémoire" (*op. cit.*, IV, 335-36).

against another, so that in the conflict of interests she might retain the balance of power. For biographical details Du Radier is a constant mine of information; and here, in particular, Balzac is clever in extracting details from footnotes and running them smoothly into his text. If the source tries to present all sides of a disputed point, he chooses the side which best suits his theme and avoids controversy by means of vague, general references similar to those already discussed.

XIV

All this accumulation of historical detail—fused by Balzac's penetrating generalizations and lending plausibility to the thoughts and words and actions of characters quite foreign to the modern world of the *Comédie humaine*—all this massing produces upon the reader an impression of historicity not to be denied. Modern authorities⁸⁰ may doubt that the Hôtel de Soissons was built for astrological purposes; the fact remains that many people, including some historians, believe that Catherine's interest in occult sciences was responsible for its construction. At the time of the La Mole-Coconnas conspiracy she may not have protected Cosimo Ruggieri to the extent that Balzac, relying on his principal source, suggests; but she was fascinated by his "magic" and is generally thought to have been a sponsor for him. Astrology as a science is discredited now; but Balzac would be untrue to the sixteenth century if he did not play up its widespread belief in that and other occult sciences. Historians today do not hold that Catherine was guilty of the numerous poisonings with which tradition has credited her; neither does Balzac. There is no doubt that the end of Charles's life was filled with morbid fears, that lethargy alternated with sudden bursts of activity; Balzac seems to have diagnosed his malady in quite modern fashion. Some of our more recent historians suspect that Catherine was less a virile, masterful woman than she was a vacillating opportunist; but Balzac really believes—with Dreux du Radier, who is representative of the eighteenth (and nineteenth) century attitudes on the subject—that power was her single aim and that she employed Machiavellian tactics to achieve it. Her policy of maintaining the balance of power by playing off one party against another marks her as truly one of the Medici, whose ability to compromise is recognized⁸¹

⁸⁰ Of the sort represented in our critical edition by Mariéjol, Thompson, Grant, and Colonel Young. Our references to these authorities in the edition will show that substantially Balzac is still considered to be in the right, historically speaking.

⁸¹ By Ralph Roeder, among others. His *Catherine de' Medici and the Lost Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1937) is of particular interest in view of Catherine's defense of St. Bartholomew's Day in *Les Deux Rêves*.

as an important factor in their rise to wealth and political influence. She was a Medici, too, in her wish to extend the prestige of her family by shrewdly arranged marriages; Balzac does not overlook the fact. Our author believes that Catherine was justified in her efforts to keep the power she had so painfully acquired; this is a matter of opinion, but he defends his thesis. If he does so a bit pedantically and unconvincingly in the 1842 "Introduction," he makes amends in advance with the eloquent insertion near the end of Chapter I. And finally, if, after having in the main followed his authorities pretty closely, he consciously juggles information in order to make some of his characters more plausible, he is only taking advantage of a license invoked by nearly all historical novelists, including Scott the master. In short, there lives and breathes in *Le Secret des Ruggieri* the spirit of the sixteenth century. This will become increasingly evident to those who will ponder over the text and annotations of our edition.

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For editions of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, see the section on the history of publication, pp. 282 ff., above; for information concerning Balzac's proposed readings, see pp. 349 ff.; and for symbols distinguishing the various sets of proofs, etc., see pp. 303-4.

